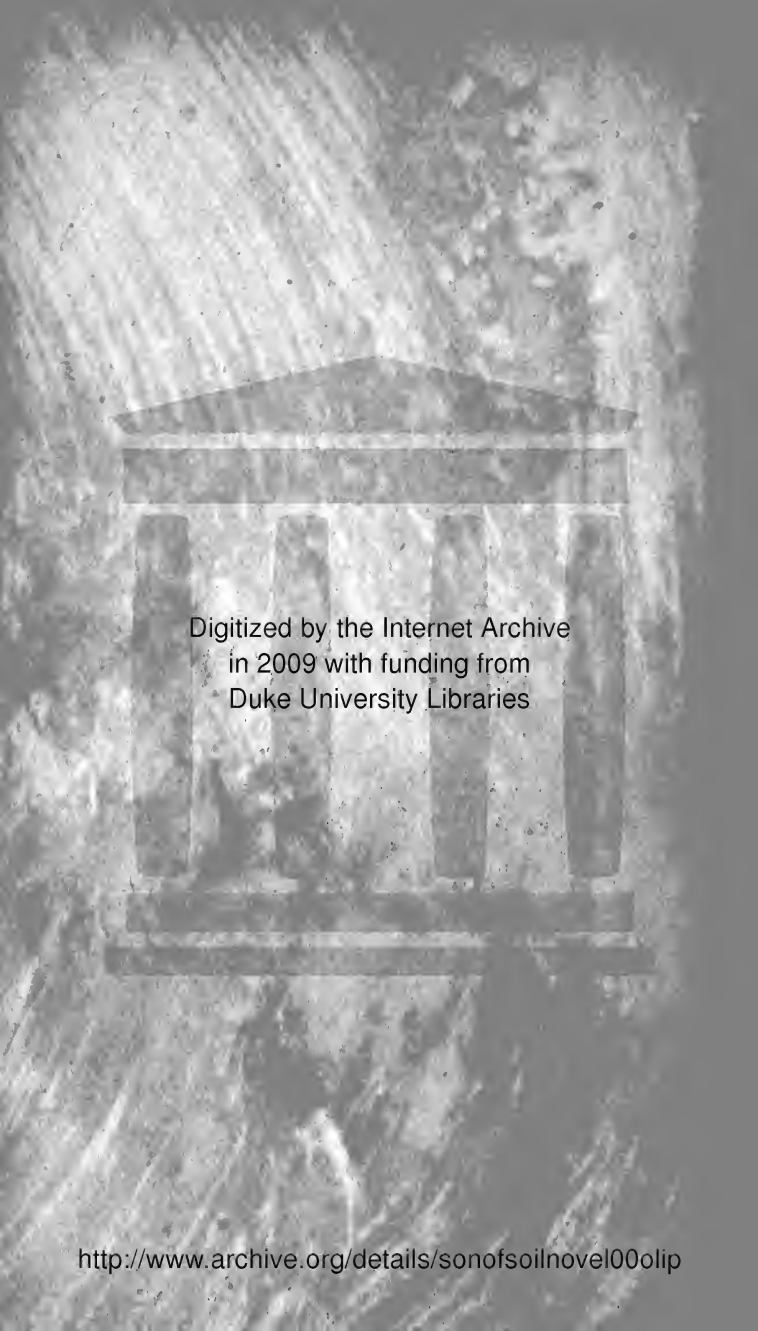
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A SON OF THE SOIL.

A Novel.

NEW YORK:
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1865.

A SON OF THE SOIL.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

"I SAY, you boy, it always rains here, doesn't it?—or 'whiles snaws'—as the aborigines say. You're a native, aren't you? When do you think the rain will go off?—do you ever have any fine weather here? I don't see the good of a fine country when it rains for ever and ever? What do you do with yourselves, you people, all the year round in such a melancholy place?"

"You see we know no better"—said the farmer of Ramore, who came in at the moment to the porch of his house, where the young gentleman was standing, confronted by young Colin, who would have exploded in boyish rage before now, if he had not been restrained by the knowledge that his mother was within hearing—"and, wet or dry, the country-side comes natural to them it belongs to. If it wercna for a twinge o' the rheumatics noo and then,—and my lads are owre young for that,—it's a grand country. If it's nae great comfort to the purse, it's aye a pleasure to the e'e. Come in to the fire, and take a seat till the rain blows by. *My* lads," said Colin of Ramore, with a twinkle of approbation in his eye, "take little heed whether it's rain or shine."

"I'm of a different opinion," said the stranger; "I don't like walking up to the ankles in those filthy roads."

He was a boy of fifteen or so, the same age as young Colin, who stood opposite him, breathing hard with opposition and natural enmity; but the smart Etonian considered himself much more a man of the world and of experience than Colin the elder, and looked on the boy with calm contempt.

"I'll be glad to dry my boots if you'll let me," he said, holding up a foot which beside young Colin's sturdy hoof looked preternaturally small and dainty.

"A fit like a lassie's!" the country boy said to himself with responsive disdain. Young Colin laughed half aloud as his natural enemy followed his father into the house.

"He's feared to wet his feet," said the lad, with a chuckle of mockery, holding forth his own which to his consciousness were never dry. Any moralist, who had happened to be at hand, might have suggested to Colin that a faculty for acquiring and keeping up wet feet during every hour of the twenty-four which he did not spend in bed was no great matter to brag of: but then moralists did not flourish at Ramore. The boy made a rush out through the soft-falling, incessant rain, dashed down upon the shingly beach with an impetuosity which dispersed the wet pebbles on all sides of him, and jumping into the boat, pushed out upon the loch, not for any particular purpose, but to relieve a little his indignation and boyish discomfiture. The boat was clumsy enough, and young Colin's "style" in rowing was not of a high order, but it caught the quick eye of the Eton lad, as he glanced out from the window.

"That fellow can row," he said to himself, but aloud, with the *nonchalance* of his race, as he went forward, passing the great cradle, which stood on one side of the fire, to the chair which the farmer's wife had placed for him. She received with many kindly, homely invitations and welcomes the serene young potentate as he approached her fireside throne.

"Come awa—come in to the fire. The roads are past speaking o' in this soft weather. Maybe the young gentleman would like to change his feet," said the soft-voiced woman, who sat in a wicker-work easy-chair, with a very small baby, and checks still pale from its recent arrival. She had soft, dark, beaming eyes, and the softest pink flush coming and going over her face, and was wrapped in a shawl, and evidently considered an invalid—which, for the mother of seven or eight children, and the mistress of Ramore Farm, was an honorable but inconvenient luxury. "I could bring you a pair of my Colin's stockings in a moment. I dare say they're about your size—or if you would like to gang

ben the house into the spare room, and change them—"

"Oh, thanks; but there is no need for that," said the visitor, with a slight blush, being conscious, as even an Eton boy could not help being, of the humorous observation of the farmer, who had come in behind him, and in whose eyes it was evident the experienced "man" of the fifth form was a less sublime personage than he gave himself credit for being. "I am living down at the Castle," he added, hastily; "I lost my way on the hills, and got dreadfully wet; otherwise I don't mind the rain." And he held the dainty boots, which steamed in the heat, to the fire.

"But you maunna gang out to the hills in such slight things again," said Mrs. Campbell, looking at them compassionately; "I'll get you a pair of my Colin's strong shoes and stockings that'll keep your feet warm. I'll just lay the wean in the cradle, and you can slip them off the time I'm away," said the good woman, with a passing thought for the boy's bashfulness. But the farmer caught her by the arm and kept her in her chair.

"I suppose there's mair folk than you about the house, Jeanie?" said her husband, "though you're so positive about doing everything yoursel'. I'll tell the lass; and I advise you, young gentleman, not to be shamefaced, but take the wife's advice. It's a great quality o' hers to ken what's good for other folk."

"I ken by mysel'," said the gentle-voiced wife, with a smile—and she got up and went softly to the window, while the young stranger took her counsel. "There's Colin out in the boat again, in a perfect pour of rain," she said to herself, with a gentle sigh—"he'll get his death o' cauld; but, to be sure, if he had been to get his death that gate, it would have come afore now. There's a great deal of rain in this country you'll be thinking?—a' the strangers say sae; but I canna see that they bide away, for a' that, though they're aye grumbling. And if you're fond o' the hills, you'll get reconciled to the rain. I've seen mony an afternoon when there was scarce an hour without two or three rainbows, and the mist liftin' and droppin' again, as if it was set to music. I canna say I have any experience mysel'; but so far as ane can imagine, a clear sky and a shining sun, day after day, would be awfu' monotonous—like a face wi' a set smile. I tell the bairns it's as guid as a fairy tale to watch the clouds—and it's no common sunshine when it does come, but a kind o' wistful light, as if he couldna tell whether he ever might see you again; but it's awfu' when the crops are out, as they are the noo—the Lord forgive me for speaking as if I liked the rain!"

And by this time her boy-visitor, having succeeded, much to his comfort and disgust, in replacing his wet *chaussures* by Colin's dry, warm stockings and monstrous shoes, Mrs. Campbell came back to her seat and lifted her baby again on her knee. The baby was of angelic disposition, and perfectly disposed to make itself comfortable in its cradle; but the usually active mother evidently made it a kind of excuse to herself for her compulsory repose.

"The wife gets easy to her poetry," said the farmer, with a smile, "which is pleasant enough to hear, though it doesn't keep the grain from sprouting. You're fond of the hills, you Southland folk? You'll be from level land yoursel', I reckon?—where a' the craps were safe housed afore the weather broke? We have nae particular reason to complain yet, if we could but make sure o' a week's or twa's dry weather. It'll be the holidays still with you?"

"Yes," said young Frankland, slightly disgusted at being so calmly set down as a schoolboy.

"I hear there's some grand schools in England," said Mrs. Campbell; "no' that they're to compare wi' Edinburgh, I suppose? Colin, there's some sherry wine in the press; I think a glass wouldna' harm the young gentleman after his waiting. He'll take something anyway, if you would tell Jess. It's hungry work climbing our hills for a laddie like you, at least if I may reckon by my ain laddies that are aye ready at mealtimes," said the farmer's wife, with a gracious smile that would not have misbecome a duchess. "You'll be at ane o' the great schools, I suppose? I aye like to learn what I can when there's ony opportunity. I would like my Colin to get a' the advantages, for he's well worthy o' a guid education, though we're rather out of the way of it here."

"I am at Eton," said the English boy, who could scarcely refrain from a little ridicule at the idea of sharing "a' the advantages" of that distinguished foundation with a colt like young Colin; "but I should think you would

find it too far off to send your son there," he added, all his good breeding being unable to smother a slight laugh as he looked round the homely apartment and wondered what "all the fellows" would say to a schoolfellow from Ramore.

"Nae occasion to laugh, young gentleman," said Colin the elder; "there's been lord chancellors o' England, and generals o' a' the forces, that have come out of houses nae better than this. I am just as ye find me; but I wouldna' say what might befall our Colin. In this country there's nae law to bind a man to the same line o' life as his fathers. Despise naebody, my man, or you may live to be despised in your turn."

"I beg your pardon," said young Frankland, blushing hotly, and feeling Colin's shoes weigh upon his feet like lead; "I did not intend—"

"No, no," said Mrs. Campbell, soothingly; "it's the maister that takes up fancies; but nae doubt Eton is far ower-expensive for the like of us, and a bit callant like you may laugh without ony offence. When Colin comes to be a man he'll make his ain company, or I'm mistaen; but I've no wish to pit him among lords and gentlemen's sons that would jeer at his homely ways. And they tell me there's schules in Edinburgh far afore anything that's kent in England—besides the college," said the mother, with a little pride; "our Colin's done with his schuling. Education takes longer wi' the like of you. After Martinmas he's gaun in to Glasgow to begin his *course*."

To this proud intimation the young visitor listened in silence, not being able to connect the roughshod lad in the boat, with a university, whatever might be its form. He addressed himself to the scones and butter which Jess the servant, a handsome, powerful woman of five feet ten or so, had set before him on the table. Jess lingered a little ere she left the room, to pinch the baby's cheeks, and say, "Bless the lamb! eh, what a guid bairn!" with patriarchal friendly familiarity. Meanwhile, the farmer sat down, with a thump which made it creak, upon the large old haircloth sofa which filled up one end of the room.

"I've heard there's a great difference between our colleges and the colleges in England," said Colin. "Wi' you they dinna train a lad to onything in particular; wi' us it's a' for a profession,—the kirk, or the law, or physic, as it may be,—a fair mair sensible system. I'm no sure it's just civil, though," said the farmer, with a quaint mingling of Scotch complacency and Scotch politeness, "to talk to a stranger of naething but the inferiority o' his ain country. It may be a' true enough, but there's pleasanter topics o' discourse. The Castle's a bonnie situation? and if you're fond o' the water, yachting and boating, and that kind o' thing, there's grand opportunity amang our lochs."

"We've got a yacht," said the boy, who found the scones much to his taste, and began to feel a glow of comfort diffusing itself through his inner man—"the fastest sailer I know. We made a little run yesterday down to the Kyles; but Sir Thomas prefers the grouse, though it's awfully hard work, I can tell you, going up those hills. It's so beastly wet," said the young hero, "I never was down here before; but Sir Thomas comes every year to the Highlands—he likes it—he's as strong as a horse; but I prefer the yacht, for my part."

"And who's Sir Thomas, if ane may speer—some friend?" said the farmer's wife.

"Oh—he's my father!" said the Etonian; and a natural flush of shamefacedness at acknowledging such a relationship rose upon the countenance of the British boy.

"Your father?" said Mrs. Campbell, with some amazement, "that's an awfu' queer way to speak of your father; and have you ony brothers and sisters that you're this lang distance off your lane,—and your mamma may be anxious about you?" continued the kind mother, with a wistful look of inquiry. She was prepared to be sorry for him, concluding that a boy who spoke of a father in such terms, must be motherless, and a neglected child. It was the most tender kind of curiosity which animated the good woman. She formed a theory about the lad on the spot, as women do, and concluded that his cruel father paid no regard to him, and that the boy's heart had been hardened by neglect and want of love. "Figure our Colin ca'ing the maister Mr. Campbell!" she said to herself, and looked very pitifully at young Frankland, who ate his scone without any consciousness of her amiable imaginations.

"Oh, I'm not afraid," said the calm youth, "She knows better; there's ten of us, and some one of the family comes to grief most days, you know. She's used to that. Be-

sides, I'll get home long before Sir Thomas. It's only four now, and I suppose one could walk down from here—how soon?" All this time he went on so steadily at the scones and the milk, that the heart of the farmer's wife, warmed to the possessor of such a frank and appreciative appetite.

"You might put the horse in the gig and drive the young gentleman down," said the soft-hearted woman, "or Colin could row him in the boat as far as the pier. It's a lang walk for such a callant, and you're no thrang. It's awfu' to think o' the rain how it's taking the bread out of us poor folk's mouths; but to be sure it's the Lord's will—if it be na," said the homely speculatist, "that the weather's ane of the things that has been permitted, for wise reasons, to fa' into Ither Hands; and I'm sure, judging by the way it comes just when it is no' wanted, ane might think so, mony a time in this country side. But ah! its sinfu' to speak,—and look at yon bonnie rainbow," she continued, turning to the window with her baby in her arms. Young Frankland got up slowly as he finished his scone. He was only partially sensible of the extreme beauty of the scene before him; but the farmer's wife stood with her baby in her arms, with hidden lights kindling in her soft eyes, expanding and beaming over the lovely landscape. It did her good like a cordial; though even Colin, her sensible husband, looked on with a smile upon his good-humored countenance, and was a little amused and much puzzled, as he had been a hundred times before, seeing his wife's pleasure in those common and every-day processes of nature, to know why.

Young Colin in the boat understood better,—he was lying on his oars gazing at it the same moment; arrested in his petulant, boyish thoughts, as she had been in her anxieties, the lad came out of, and lost himself in the scene. The sun had come out suddenly upon the noble range of hills which stretched across the upper end of the loch—that wistful, tender sun which shone out, dazzling with pathetic gleams of sudden love in this country, "as if he couldna tell whether he might ever see you again," as Mrs. Campbell said—and just catching the skirts of the rain, had flung a double rainbow across the lovely curve of the upper banks. One side of the arch, stooping over the heathery hillside, lighted it up with an unearthly glory, and the other came down in stately columns, one grand shaft within the other, with a solid magnificence and steadiness, into the water. Young Frankland, at the window, could not help thinking within himself, what a beautiful picture it would make, "if any of those painter fellows could do a rainbow;" but as for young Colin in the boat, the impulse in his heart was to dash up to those heavenly archways, and embrace the shining pillar, and swing himself aloft half-boy, half-poet, to the celestial world, where fiery columns could stand fast upon moving waters—and all was true, but nothing real. The hills for their share, lay very quiet, taking no part in the momentary drama of the elements; standing passive, letting the sudden light search them over and over, as if seeking for hidden treasure. Just in the midst of the blackness of the rain, never was light and joy so sweet and sudden. The farmer's wife came away from the window with a sigh of pleasure, as the baby stirred in her arms; "Eh, but the world's bonnie, bonnie!" she said to herself, with a feeling that some event of joyful importance had just been enacted before her. As for the boy on the loch, who, being younger, was more abstracted from common affairs, his dream was interrupted loudly by a call from the door. "Come in wi' the boat; I've a message to gie ye for the pier," cried the farmer, at the top of his voice; and the country boy started back to himself, and made a dash at his oars, and pulled inshore as violently and unhandsomely as if the nature of his dreams had been found out, and he was ashamed of himself. Colin forgot all the softening influences of the scene, and all the fine thoughts that had, unconscious to himself, come into his head, when he found that the commission his father meant to give him, was that of rowing the stranger boy as far as the pier, which was about three miles farther down the loch. If disobedience had been an offence understood at Ramore, possibly he might have refused; but neither boy nor man, however well inclined, is likely to succeed in doing, the first time of trying, a kind of sin with which he has no acquaintance. To give Colin justice, he did his best, and showed a cordial inclination to make himself disagreeable. He came in so clumsily that the boat grounded a yard or two off shore, and would not by any coaxing be persuaded to approach nearer. And when young Frankland, much to his amaze-

ment, leaped on board without wetting his feet, as the country lad maliciously intended, and came against Colin with such force as almost to knock him down, the young boatman thrust his passenger forward very rudely, and was as near capsizing the boat as pride would permit him. "Sit forrit in the stern, sit forrit. Were ye never in a boat afore, that ye think I can row, and you sitting there?" said the unchristian Colin, bringing one of the oars heavily against his adversary's shins.

"What the deuce do you mean by that? Give me the oar! We don't row like that on the Thames, I can tell you," said the stranger; and the brief skirmish between them for the possession of the oar having terminated abruptly by the intervention of Colin the elder, who was still within hearing, the two boys set off, sullenly enough, down the loch. The rainbow was dying off by this time, and the clouds rolling up again over the hills; and the celestial pillars and heavenly archways had no longer, as may be supposed, since this rude invasion of the real and disagreeable, the least morsel of foundation in the thoughts of young Colin of Ramore.

CHAPTER II.

"Ye saw the young gentleman safe to the pier? He's a bonnie lad, though maybe no as weel-mannered as ane would like to see," said Mrs. Campbell. "Keep me! such a way to name his father! Bairns maun be awfu' neglected in such a grand house—aye left wi' servants, and never trained to trust their bits of secrets to father or mother. Laddies," said the farmer's wife, with a little solemnity, looking across the sleeping baby upon the four heads of different sizes which bent over their supper at the table before her, "mind you aye, that, right or wrong, them that's maist interested in whatever befalls you is them that belongs to you—maist ready to praise if ye've done weel, and excuse you if ye've done wrang. I hope you were civil to the strange callant, Colin, my man?"

"Oh, ay," said young Colin, not without a movement of conscience; but he did not think it necessary to enter into details.

"When a callant like that is pridefu', and looks as if he thought himself better than other folk, I hope my laddies are no the ones to mind," said the mistress of Ramore. "It shows he hasna had the advantages that might have been expected. It's nae harm to you, but a great deal of harm to him. Ye dinna ken how weel off you are, you boys," said the mother, making a little address to them as they sat over their supper; little Johnnie, whose porridge was too hot for him, turned towards her the round, wondering black eyes, which beamed out like a pair of stray stars from his little freckled face, and through his wisps of flaxen hair, bleached white by rain and sun; but the three others went on very steadily with their supper, and did not disturb themselves; "there's aye your father at hand ready to tell ye whatever you want to ken—no like yon poor callant, that would have to gang to a tutor, or a servant, or something worse; no that he's an ill laddie—but I'm aye keen to see ye behave yoursels like gentlemen, and yon wasna ony great specimen, as it was very easy to see."

After this there was a pause, for none of the boys were disposed to enter into that topic of conversation. After a little period of silence, during which the spoons made a diversion, and filled up the vacancy, they began to find their tongues again.

"It's awfu' wet up on the hill," said Archie, the second boy; "and they say the glass is aye falling, and the corn on the Barnton fields has been out this three weeks, and Dugald Macfarlane, he says its sprouting—and, O mother!"

"What is it, Archie?"

"The new minister came by when I was down at the smiddy with the brown mare. You never saw such a red head. It is red enough to set the kirk on fire. They were saying at the smiddy that naebody would stand such a color of hair—it's waur than no preaching weel—and I said I thought that too," said the enterprising Archie; "for I'm sure I never mind ony o' the sermon, but I couldna forget such red hair."

"And I saw him too," said little Johnnie; "he clapped me on the head, and said how was my mammaw, and I said we never ca'ed onybody mammaw, but just mother; and then he clapped me again, and said I was a good boy. What for was I a good boy?" said Johnnie, who was of an inquiring and philosophical frame of mind, "because I said we didna say mammaw? or just because it was me?"

"Because he's a kind man, and has a kind thought for even the little bairns," said Mrs.

Campbell, "and it wasna like a boy o' mine to say an idle word against him. Do you think they know better at the smiddy, Archie, than here? Poor gentleman," said the good woman, "to be a' this time wearyin' and waitin', and his heart yearnin' within him to get a kirk, and do his Master's work; and then to ha'e a parcel of haverels set up, and make a faction against him because he has a red head. It makes ane think shame o' human nature and Scotch folk baith."

"But he canna preach, mother," said Colin, breaking silence almost for the first time; "the red head is only an excuse."

"I dinna like excuses," said his mother, "and I never kent before that you were a judge o' preaching. You may come to ken better about it yoursel' before a' 's done. I canna but think there's something wrang when the like o' that can be," said Mrs. Campbell; "he's studied, and he's learned Latin and Greek, and found out a' the ill that can be said about Scripture, and a' the lies that ever have been invented against the truth; and he's been brought up to be a minister a' his days, and knows what's expected. But as soon as word gangs about that the earl has promised him our kirk, there's opposition raised. No' that onybody kens ony ill of him; but there's the smith, and the wright, and Thomas Scott o' Lintwearie, maun lay their heads thegether, and first they say he canna preach, and then that he'll no' visit, and at least if a'thing else fails, that he has a red head. If it was a new doctor that was coming, wha would be heeding about the color o' his hair? but it's the minister that's to stand by our death-beds, and baptize our bairns, and guide us in the right way; and we're no' to let him come in peace, or sit down in comfort. If we canna keep him from getting the kirk, we can make him miserable when he does get it. Eh, bairns; I think shame! and I'm no' so sure as I am in maist things," said the farmer's wife, looking up with a consciousness of her husband's presence; "that the maister himsel—"

"Weel I'm aye for popular rights," said Colin of Ramore. He had just come in, and had been standing behind taking off his big coat, on which the rain glistened, and listening to all that his wife said, "But if Colin was a man and a minister," said the farmer, with a gleam of humor, as he drew his chair towards the fire, "and had to fight his way to a kirk like a' the young men now-a-days, I wouldna say I would like it. They might object to his big mouth; and you've ower muckle a mouth yourself, Jeanie," continued big Colin, looking admiringly at the comely mother of his boys. "I might tell them wha' he took it from, and that if he had as grand a flow of language as his mother, there would be nae fear o' him. As for the red head, the earl himsel's a grand example, and if red hair's right in an earl, it canna be immoral in a minister; but Jeanie, though you're an awfu' revolutionary, ye maunna meddle with the kirk, nor take away popular rights."

"I'm no gaun to be led into an argument," said the mistress, with a slightly vexed expression; "but I'm far from sure about the kirk. After you've opposed the minister's coming in, and holden committees upon him, and offered objections, and done your best to worry the life out o' him, and make him disgusted baith at himsel' and you, do you think after that ye can attend to him when you're weel, and send for him when you're sick, wi' the right feelings? But I'm no gaun to speak ony mair about the minister. Is the corn in yet, Colin, from the East Park? Eh, bless me! and it was cut before this wean was born!"

"We'll have but a poor harvest after a'," said the farmer; "it's a disappointment, but it canna be helpit. It's strange how something aye comes in, to keep a man down when he thinks he's to have a bit margin; but we must jog on, Jeanie, my woman. As long as we have bread to eat, let us be thankful. And as for Colin, it needna make ony difference. Glasgow's no so far off, but he can still get his parritch out of the family meal; and as long as he's careful and diligent we'll try and fend for him. It's hard work getting bread out of our hillside," said big Colin; "but ye may have a different life from your father's, lad, if ye take heed to the opportunities in your hands."

"A' the opportunities in the world," said Colin the younger, in a burst, "wouldna give me a chance like yon English fellow. Everything comes ready to him. It's no fair. I'll have to make up wi' him first, and then beat him—and so I would," said the boy, with a

glow on his face, and a happy unconsciousness of contradicting himself, "if I had the chance."

"Well," said big Colin, "that's just ane o' the things we have to count upon in our way of living. It's little credit to a man to be strong," said the farmer, stretching his great arms with a natural consciousness of power, "unless he has that to do that tries it. It's harder work to me, you may be sure, to get a pickle corn off the hillside, than for the English farmers down in yon callant's country to draw wheat and fatness out o' their furrows. But I think myself nane the worse a man," continued Colin of Ramore, with a smile. "Sir Thomas, as the laddie ca's him, gangs wading over the heather a' day after the grouse and the paitricks; he thinks he's playing himsel', but he's as hard at work as I am. We're a' bluid relations, though the family likeness whiles lies deep and is hard to find. A man maun be fighting wi' something. If it's no the dour earth that refuses him bread, it's the wet bog, and the heather that comes atween him and his sport, as he ca's it. Never you mind wha's before you on the road. Make up to him, Colin. Many a day he'll stray out o' the path gathering straws to divert himself, when you've naething to do but to push on."

"Eh, but I wouldna like a laddie of mine to think," interrupted his mother, eagerly, "that there's nae guid but getting on in the world. I'll not have my bairns learn ony such lesson. Laddies," said the farmer's wife, in all the solemnity of her innocence, "mind you this aboon a'. You might be princes the morn, and no as good men as your father. There's nae Sir Thomases, nor earls, nor lord chancellors I ever heard tell o', that was mair thought upon nor wi' better reason—"

At this moment Jess entered from the kitchen, to suggest that it was bedtime.

"And lang enough for the mistress to be sitting up, and she so delicate," said the sole servant of the house. "If ye had been in your ain room wi' a fire and a book to read, it would have been wiser-like, than among a' thae noisy laddies, wi' the wean and a seam as if ye were as strong as me. Maister, I wish you would speak to Colin; he's awfu' masterfu'; instead of gaun to his bed, like a civilized lad, yonder he is awa' ben to the kitchen and down by the fire to read his book, till his hair's like a singed sheep's head, and his cheeks like burning peats. Ane canna do a hand's-turn wi' a parcel o' callants about the place day and nicht," said Jess, in an aggrieved tone.

"And just when Archie Candlish has suppered his horses and come in for half-an-hour's crack," said the master. "I'll send Colin to his bed; but dinna have ower muckle to say to Archie; he's a rover," continued the good-tempered farmer, who "made allowances" for a little love-making. He raised himself out of his arm-chair with a little hesitation, like a great mastiff uncoiling itself out of a position of comfort, and went slowly away, moving off through the dimly lighted room like an amiable giant as he was.

"Eh, keep me!—and Archie Candlish had just that very minute lookit in at the door," said Jess, lifting her apron to her cheeks, which were glowing with blushes and laughter. "No that I wanted him; but he came in wi' the news aboot the new minister, and noo I'll never hear an end o't, and the maister will think he's aye there."

"If he's a decent lad and means well, it's nae great matter," said the mistress; "but I dinna approve of ower mony lads. Ye may gang through the wood and through the wood and take but a crooked stick at the end."

"There's naebody I ken o' that the mistress can mean, but Bowed Jacob," said Jess reflectively, "and ane might do waur than take him, though he's nae great figure of a man. The siller that body makes is a miracle, and it would be grand to live in a twa-storied house, and keep a lass; but he's an awfu' establishment man, and he micht interfere wi' my convictions," said the young woman with a glimmer of humor which found no response in the mistress's serious eyes; for Mrs. Campbell, being of a poetical and imaginative temperament, took most things much in earnest, and was slow to perceive a joke.

"You shouldna speak about convictions in that light way, Jess," said the farmer's wife. "I wouldna meddle wi' them mysel', no for a' the wealth o' the parish; but though the maister and me are strong Kirk folk, ye ken ye never were molested here."

"To hear Archie Candlish about the new minister!" cried Jess, whose quick ear had already ascertained that her master had paused in the kitchen to speak to her visitor, "ye would laugh; but though it's grand fun for the folk, maybe it's no so pleasant for the

poor man. We put down our names for the man we like best, us Free Kirk folks; but it's different in the parish. There's Tammas Scott, he vows he'll object to every presentee the earl puts in. I'm no heeding for the earl," said Jess; "he's a dour Tory and can fecht for himsel'; but eh I wouldna be that poor minister set up there for a' the parish to object to. I'd rather work at a weaver's loom or sell herrings about the country-side, if it was me!"

"Weel, weel, things that are hard for the flesh are guid for the spirit—or at least folk say so," cried the mistress of Ramore.

"I dinna believe in that for my part," said the energetic Jess, as she lifted the wooden cradle in her strong arms. "Leave the wean still, mistress, and draw your shawl about ye. I could carry you, too, for that matter. Eh me, I'm no o' that way o' thinking; when ye're happy and weel likit, ye're aye good in proportion. No to gang against the words o' Scripture," said Jess, setting down the big cradle with a bump in her mistress's bedroom, and looking anxiously at the sleeping baby, which, with a little start and gape, resisted this attempt to break its slumbers; "but eh, mistress, it's aye my opinion that the happier folk are the better they are. I never was as happy as in this house," continued the grateful handmaiden, furtively pursuing a tear into the corner of her eye, with a large forefinger, "no that I'm meaning to say I'm guid; but yet—"

"You might be waur," said the mistress, with a smile. "You've aye a kind heart and a blythe look, and that gangs a far way wi' the maister and me. But it's time Archie Candlish was hame to his mother. When there's nae moon and such heavy roads, you shouldna bring a decent man three miles out of his way at this hour o' the nicht to see yon."

"Me? As if *I* was wanting him," said Jess, "and him no a word to say to me or ony lass, but about the beasts and the new minister! I'll be back in half a minute; I wouldna waste my time upon a gomeril like yon."

While Jess sallied forth through the chilly passages to which the weeping atmosphere had communicated a sensation of universal damp, the mistress knelt down to arrange her infant more commodiously in its homely nest. The red firelight made harmless glimmers all over her figure, catching now and then a side-long glance out of her eyes as she smoothed the little pillow, and laid the tiny coverlet over the small unconscious creature wrapped closely in webs and bands of sleep. When she had done, she still knelt, watching it as mothers will, with a smile upon her face. After a while the beaming, soft dark eyes turned to the light with a natural attraction, to the glimmers of the fire shooting accidental rays into all the corners, and to the steady little candle on the mantle-shelf. The mistress looked round on all the familiar objects of the homely, low-roofed chamber.

Outside, the rain fell heavily still upon the damp and sodden country, soaking silently in the dark into the forlorn wheat-sheaves, which had been standing in the fields to dry in ineffectual hopefulness for weeks past. Matters did not look promising on the farm of Ramore, and nothing had occurred to add any particular happiness to its mistress's lot. But happiness is perverse and follows no rule, and Jess's sentiment found an echo in Mrs. Campbell's mind. As she knelt by the cradle, her heart suddenly swelled with a consciousness of the perfection of life and joy in her and around her. It was in homely words enough that she gave it expression, "A' weel, and under ae roof," she said to herself with exquisite dews of thankfulness in her eyes. "And the Lord have pity on lone folk and sorrowful," added the tender woman, with a compassion beyond words, a yearning that all might be glad like herself,—the pity of happiness, which is of all pity, the most divine. Her boys were saying abrupt prayers, one by one, as they sank in succession into dreamless slumber. The master had gone out in the rain to take one last look over his kine and his farmyard, and see that all was safe for the night, and Archie Candlish had just been dismissed with a stinging jest from the kitchen door, which Jess bolted and barred with cheerful din, singing softly to herself as she went about the house putting up the innocent shutters, which could not have resisted the first touch of a skilful hand. The rain was falling all over the wet, silent country: the Holy Loch gleamed like a kind of twilight spot in the darkness, and the house of Ramore stood shut up and hushed, no light at all to be seen but that from the open door, which the farmer suddenly extinguished as he came in. But when the solitary light died out from the invisible hillside, and the darkness and the rain

and the whispering night took undisturbed possession, was just the moment when the mother within, kneeling over her cradle in the firelight, was surprised by that sudden, conscious touch of happiness. "Happiness? oh, ay, weel enough; we've a great deal to be thankfu' for," said big Colin, with a little sleepy surprise; "if it werna for the sprouting corn and the broken weather; but I dinna see onything particular to be happy about at this minute, and I'm gaun to my bed."

For the prose and the poetry did not exactly understand each other at all times, even in the primitive farmhouse of Ramore.

CHAPTER III.

The internal economy of a Scotch parish is not so clearly comprehensible now-a-days as it was in former times. Civilization itself has made countless inroads upon the original unities everywhere, and the changes that have come to pass within the recollection of the living generation are almost as great, though very different from, those which made Scotland during last century so picturesque in its state of transition. When Sunday morning dawned upon the Holy Loch, it did not shine upon that pretty rural picture of unanimous church-going, so well known to the history of the past. The groups from the cottages took different ways—the carriage from the Castle swept round the hill to the other side of the parish, where there was an "English Chapel." The reign of opinion and liking was established in the once primitive community. Half of the people ascended the hillside to the Free Church, while the others wound down the side of the loch to the kirk which had once accommodated the whole parish. This state of affairs had become so usual that even polemical feeling had ceased to a great extent, and the two streams of church-going people crossed each other placidly without recriminations. This day, for a wonder, the sun was shining brightly, notwithstanding a cloudy, stormy sky, which now and then heaved forward a rolling mass of vapor, and dispersed it sharply over the hills in a flying mist and shower. The parish church lay at the lower end of the loch, a pretty little church built since the days when architecture had penetrated even into Scotland. Colin of Ramore and his family were there in their pew, the boys arranged in order of seniority between Mrs. Campbell, who sat at the head, and the farmer himself who kept the seat at the door. Black-eyed Johnnie with his hair bleached white by constant exposure, and his round eyes wandering over the walls and the pews and the pulpit and the people, sat by his mother's side, and the younger Colin occupied his post of seniority by his father. They were all seated, in this disposition, when the present occupant of the Castle, Sir Thomas Frankland, lounged up the little aisle with his son after him. Sir Thomas was quite devout and respectable, a man who knew how to conduct himself even in a novel scene—and after all a Presbyterian church was no novelty to the sportsman; but to Harry the aspect of everything was new, and his curiosity was excited. It was a critical moment in the history of the parish. The former minister had been transferred only a few weeks before to a more important station, and the earl, the patron, had, according to Scotch phraseology, "presented" a new incumbent to the living. This unhappy man was ascending the pulpit when the Franklands, father and son, entered the church. For the earl's presentation by no means implied the peaceable entrance of the new minister; he had to preach, to give the people an opportunity of deciding whether they liked him or not; and if they did not like him, they had the power of "objecting;" that is, of urging special reasons for their dislike before the Presbytery, with a certainty of making a little noise in the district, and a reasonable probability of disgusting and mortifying the unlucky presentee, to the point of throwing up his appointment. All this was well known to the unfortunate man, who rose up in the pulpit as Sir Thomas found a seat, and proceeded to read the psalm with a somewhat embarrassed and faltering voice. He was moderately young and well-looking, with a face, at the present moment, more agitated than was quite harmonious with the position in which he stood; for he was quite aware that everybody was criticising him, and that the inflections of his voice and the fiery tint of his hair were being noted by eager commentators bent upon finding ground for an "objection" in everything he said. Such a consciousness naturally does not promote ease or comfort. His hair looked redder than ever, as a stray ray of sunshine gleamed in upon him, and his voice took a nervous break as he looked over the many hard, unsympa-

thetic faces which were regarding him with the sharp curiosity and inspection of excited wits. While Harry Frankland made, as he thought, "an ass of himself" on every occasion that offered—standing bolt upright when the congregation began to sing, which they did at their leisure, seated in the usual way—and kicking his heels in an attempt to kneel when everybody round him rose up for the prayer, and feeling terribly red and ashamed at each mistake, Colin the younger, of Ramore, occupied himself, like a heartless young critic as he was, in making observations on the minister. Colin, like his father, had a high opinion of "popular rights." It was his idea, somehow drawn in with the damp Highland air he breathed, that the right of objecting to a presentee was one of the most important privileges of a Scotch Churchman. Then, he was to be a minister himself, and the consciousness of this fact intensified the natural opposition which prompted the boy's mind to resist anything and everything that threatened to be imposed on him. Colin even listened to the prayer, which was a thing not usual with him, that he might find out the objectionable phrases. And to be sure there were plenty of objectionable phrases to mar the real devotion; the vainest of vain repetitions, well-known and familiar as household words to every Scotch ear, demonstrated how little effect the absence of a liturgy has in promoting fervent and individual supplications. The congregation in general listened, like young Colin, standing up in easy attitudes, and observing everything that passed around them with open-eyed composure. It did not look much like common supplication, nor did it pretend to be—for the people were but *listening* to the minister's prayer, which, to tell the truth, contained various expository and remonstrative paragraphs, which were clearly addressed to the congregation; and they were all very glad to sit down when it was over, and clear their throats, and prepare for the sermon, which was the real business of the day."

"I dinna like a' that new-fangled nonsense to begin with," said Eben Campbell, of Barnton, as he walked home after church, with the party from Ramore; "naebody wants twa chapters read at one diet of worship. The Bible's grand at hame, but that's no what a man gangs to the kirk for; that, and so mony prayers—it's naething but a great offput of time."

"But we never can have ower muckle o' the word of God," said Colin of Ramore's wife.

"I'm of Eben's opinion," said another neighbor. "We have the word o' God at hame, and I hope we make a good use o' it; but that's no what we gang to the kirk to hear. When ye see a man that's set up in the pulpit for anither purpose a'thegether, spending half his time in reading chapters and ither preliminaries, I aye consider it's a sure sign that he hasna muckle o' his ain to say."

They were all walking abreast in a leisurely Sunday fashion up the loch; the children roaming about the skirts of the older party, some in front and some behind, occasionally making furtive investigations into the condition of the brambles, an anti-sabbatical occupation which was sharply interrupted when found out—the women picking their steps along the edges of the muddy road, with now and then a word of pleasant gossip, while the men trudged on sturdily through the puddles, discussing the great subject of the day.

"Some of the new folk from the Castle were in the kirk to-day," said one of the party,—"which is a respect to the parish the earl doesna pay himself. Things are terrible changed in that way since my young days. The auld earl, this ane's father, was an elder in the Kirk; and gentle and simple, we a' said our prayers thegether—"

"I dinna approve of that expression," said Eben of Barnton. "To speak of saying your prayers in the kirk is pure papistry. Say your prayers at hame, as I hope we a' do, at the family altar, no to speak of private devotions," said this defender of the faith, with a glance at the unlucky individual who was understood not to be so regular in the article of family prayer as he ought to have been. "We gang to the kirk to have our minds stirred up and put in remembrance. I dinna approve of the English fashion of putting everything into the prayers."

"Weel, weel, I meant nae harm," said the previous speaker. "We a' gaed to the kirk, was what I meant to say; and there's the queen, she aye sets a grand example. You'll no find her driving off three or four miles to an English chapel. I consider it's

a great respect to the parish to see Sir Thomas in the Castle pew."

"I would rather see him respect the sabbath-day," said Eben Campbell, pointing out a little pleasure-boat, a tiny little cockle-shell, with a morsel of snow-white sail, which just then appeared in the middle of the loch, rushing up beautifully before the wind, through the placid waters, and lighting up the landscape with a touch of life and motion. Young Colin was at Eben's elbow, and followed the movement of his hand with keen eyes. A spark of jealousy had kindled in the boy's breast—he could not have told why. He was not so horrified as he ought to have been at the sight of the boat disturbing the Sunday quiet; but, with a swell of indignation and resentment in his boyish heart, he thought of the difference between himself and the young visitor at the Castle. It looked symbolical to Colin. He, trudging heavily over the muddy, lengthy road; the other, flying along in that dainty little bird-like boat, with those white wings of sail, which pleased Colin's eye in spite of himself, carrying him on as lightly and swiftly as heart could desire. Why should one boy have such a wonderful advantage over another? It was the first grand problem which had puzzled and embittered Colin's thoughts.

"There, they go!" said the boy. "It's fine and easy, running like that before the wind. They'll get to the end o' the loch before we've got over a mile. That makes an awfu' difference," said Colin, with subdued wrath; he was thinking of other things besides the long walk from church and the muddy road.

"We'll may be get home as soon, for all that," said his father, who guessed the boy's thoughts; for the elder Colin's experienced eye had already seen that mists were rising among the hills, and that the fair breeze would soon be fair no longer. The scene changed as if by enchantment while the farmer spoke. Such changes come and go like breath over the Holy Loch. The sunshine, which had been making the whole landscape into a visible paradise, vanished suddenly off the hills and waters like a frightened thing, and a visible darkness came brooding over the mountains, dropping lower every moment, like a pall of gloom over the lower banks and the suddenly paled and shivering loch. The joyous little sail, which had been careering on, as if by a natural impulse of delight, suddenly changed its character along with all the other details of the picture. The spectators saw its white sail, fluttering like an alarmed seabird, against the black background of cloud. Then it began to tack and waver and make awkward, tremulous darts across the darkened water. The party of pedestrians stood still to watch it, as the position became dangerous. They knew the loch and the winds too well to look on with composure. As for young Colin of Ramore, his heart began to leap and swell in his boyish bosom. Was that his adversary, the favored rival whom he had recognized by instinct, who was fighting for his life out there in midwater, with the storm gaining on him, and his little vessel staggering in the wind? Colin did not hear the remarks of the other spectators. He felt in his heart that he was looking on at a struggle which was for life or death, and his contempt for the skill of the amateur sailor, whose unused hands were so manifestly unable to manage the boat, was mingled with a kind of despair, lest a stronger power should snatch this opponent of his own out of the future strife, in which Colin had vowed to himself to be victorious.

"You fool! take in the sail!" he shouted, putting both his hands to his mouth, forgetting how impossible it was that the sound could reach; and then scarcely knowing what he was about, the boy rushed down to the beach, and jumped into the nearest boat. The sound of his oars furiously plashing through the silence was the first indication to his companions of what he had done. And he did not even see nor hear the calls and gestures with which he was summoned back again. His oars, and how to get there at a flight like a bird, occupied his mind entirely. Yet even in his anxiety he scorned to ask for help which would have carried him so much sooner to the spot he aimed at. As the sound of his oars dashed and echoed through the profound silence, various outcries came from the group on the bank.

"It's tempting Providence!" cried Eben Campbell. "Yon's a judgment on the sabbath-breaker,—and what can the laddie do? Come back, sir, this moment, come back! Ye'll never win there in time."

As for the boy's mother, after his first start she clasped her hands together, and watched the boat with an interest too intense

for words. "He's in nae danger," she said to herself, softly; and it would have been hard to tell whether she was sorry or glad that her boy's enterprise was attended by no personal peril.

"Let him be," said the farmer of Ramore, pushing aside his anxious neighbor, who was calling Colin ineffectually, but without intermission. Colin Campbell's face had taken a sudden crimson flush, which nobody could account for. He went off up the beach with heavy, rapid steps, scattering the shingle round his feet, to a spot exactly opposite the struggling boat, and stood there watching with wonderful eagerness. The little white sail was still fluttering and struggling like a distressed bird upon the black, overclouded water. Now it lurched over till the very mast seemed to touch the loch—now recovered itself for a tremulous moment—and finally, shivering like a living creature, gave one wild, sudden stagger, and disappeared.

When the speck of white vanished out of the black landscape, a cry came out of all their hearts; and hopeless as it was, the very man who had been calling Colin back, rushed in his turn to a boat, and pushed off violently into the loch. The women stood huddled together, helpless with terror and grief. "The bit laddie! the bit laddie!" cried one of them—"some poor woman's bairn." As for Mrs. Campbell, the world grew dark round her as she strained her eyes after Colin's boat. She did not faint, for such was not the habit of the Holy Loch; but she sank down suddenly on the wet green bank, and put up her hand over her eyes as if to shade them from some imaginary sunshine, and gazed, not seeing anything, after her boy. To see her, delicate as she was, with the woman weakness which they all understood, seating herself in this wild way on the wet bank, distracted the attention of her kindly female neighbors, even from the terrible event which had just taken place before their eyes.

"Maybe the lad can swim," said Eben Campbell's wife—"onyway yonder's your Colin running races with death to save him. But you maunna sit here—come into Dugald Macfarlane's house. There's my man away in another boat and some mair. But we canna let you sit here."

"Eh, my Colin, I canna see my Colin!" said the mistress of Ramore; but they led her away into the nearest cottage, notwithstanding her reluctance. There they all stood clustering at the window, aiding the eyes which had failed her in her weakness. Colin's mother sat silent in the chair where they had placed her, trembling and rocking herself to and fro. Her heart within her was praying and crying for the boys—the two boys whom in this moment of confused anxiety she could not separate—her own firstborn, and the stranger who was "another woman's bairn." God help all women and mothers! though Colin was safe, what could her heart do but break at the thought of the sudden calamity which had shut out the sunshine from another. She rocked herself to and fro, ceasing at last to hear what they said to her, and scarcely aware of anything except the dull clank of the oars against the boat's side; somebody coming or going, she knew not which—always coming or going—never bringing certain news which was lost and which saved.

The mistress of Ramore was still in this stupor of anxiety, when young Harry Frankland, dripping and all but insensible, was carried into Dugald Macfarlane's cottage. The little room became dark instantly with such a cloud of men that it was difficult to make out how he had been saved, or if there was indeed any life left in the lad. But Dugald Macfarlane's wife, who had the ferry-boat at Struan, and understood about drowning, had bestirred herself in the mean time, and had hot blankets and other necessities in the inner room where big Colin Campbell carried the boy. Then all the men about burst at once into the narrative. "If it hadna been for little Colin o' Ramore—" was about all Mrs. Campbell made out of the tale. The cottage was so thronged that there was scarcely an entrance left for the doctor and Sir Thomas who had both been summoned by anxious messengers. By this time the storm had come down upon the loch, and a wild, sudden tempest of rain was sweeping black across hill and water, obliterating every line of the landscape. Half-way across, playing on the surface of the water was a bit of spar with a scarlet rag attached to it, which made a great show glistening over the black waves. That was all that was visible of the pleasure-boat in which the young stranger had been bounding along so pleasantly an hour before. The neighbors dropped off gradually, dispers-

ing to other adjacent houses to talk over the incident, or pushing homeward, with an indifference to the storm that was natural to the dwellers on the Holy Loch; and it was only when she was left alone, waiting for her husband, who was in the inner room with Sir Thomas and the saved boy, that Mrs. Campbell perceived Colin's bashful face gleaming in furtively at the open door.

"It's no so wet as it was; come away, mother, now," said Colin, "there's nae fears o' *him*." And the lad pointed half with an assertion, half with an inquiry, towards the inner room. It was an unlucky moment for the shy hero; for just then big Colin of Ramore appeared with Sir Thomas at the door.

"This is the boy that saved my son," said Harry's father. "You are a brave fellow; neither he nor I will ever forget it. Let me know if there is anything I can serve you in, and to the best of my exertions I will help you as you have helped me. What does he say?"

"I say," said Colin the younger, with fierce blushes, "that it wasna me. I've done naething to be thanked for. Yon fellow swims like a fish, and he saved himself."

And then there came an answering voice from the inner room—a boy's voice subdued out of its natural falsetto into feminine tones of weakness. "He's telling a lie, that fellow there," cried the other from his bed; "he picked me up when I was about done for. I'll fight him, if he likes, as soon as I'm able! But that's a lie he tells you; that's him—that Campbell fellow there."

Upon which young Colin of Ramore clenched his fists in his wet pockets, and faced towards the door, which Dugald Macfarlane's wife closed softly, looking out upon him, shaking her head and holding up a finger to impose silence; the two fathers meanwhile looked in each other's faces. The English baronet and the Scotch farmer both broke into a low, unsteady laugh, and then with an impulse of fellowship, mutually extended their hands.

"We have nae reason to think shame of our sons," said Colin Campbell with his Scotch dignity; "as for service or reward that is neither here nor there; what my boy did your boy would do if he had the chance, and there's nae mair to be said that I can see."

"There's a great deal more to be said," said Sir Thomas; "Lady Frankland will call on Mrs. Campbell, and thank that brave boy of yours; and if you think I can forget such a service,—I tell you there's a great deal more to be said," said the sportsman, breaking down suddenly with a little effusion, of which he was half ashamed.

"The gentleman's right, Colin," said the mistress of Ramore. "God be thanked for the twa laddies! My heart was breaking for the English lady. God be thanked! That's a' there is to say. But I'll be real glad to see that open-hearted callant when he's well, and his mother too," said the farmer's wife, turning her soft eyes upon Sir Thomas, with a gracious response to the overflowing of his heart. Sir Thomas took off his hat to her as respectfully as he would have done to the queen, when she took her husband's strong arm, and followed Colin, who by this time, with his hands in his pockets, and his heart beating loudly, was halfway to Ramore; and now they had other topics besides that unfailing one of the new minister to talk of on the way.

PART II.—CHAPTER IV.

NOVEMBER weather is not cheerful on the Holy Loch. The dazzling snow on the hills when there is sunshine, the sharp cold blue of the water, the withered ferns and heather on the banks, give it, it is true, a new tone of color unknown to its placid summer beauty; but, when there is no sunshine, as is more usual, when the mountains are folded in dark mists, and the rain falls cold, and the trees rain down a still heavier and more melancholy shower of perpetually falling leaves, there is little in the landscape to cheer the spirits of the inhabitants, who, fortunately for themselves, take it very calmly, like most people accustomed to such a climate. The farmer's wife of Ramore, however, was not of that equable mind. When she looked out from her homely parlor-window, it oppressed her heart to miss her mountains, and to see the heavy atmosphere closing in over her own little stretch of hillside. She was busy, to be sure, and had not much time to think of it; but, when she paused for a moment in her many occupations, and looked wistfully for signs of "clearing," the poetic soul in her homely bosom fell subdued into an unconscious harmony with the heavy sky. If the baby looked pale by chance, the mother took gloomy views of the matter on such days, and was subject to little momentary failures of hope and courage, which amazed, and at the same time amused, big Colin, who by this time knew all about it.

"You were blythe enough about us a' yesterday, Jeanie," he would say, with a smile, "and nothing's happened to change the prospect but the rain. It's just as weel for the wean that the doctor's a dozen miles off; for it's your e'en that want physic, and a glint o' sunshine would set a' right." He was standing by her, hovering like a great good-humored cloud, his eyes dwelling upon her with that tender perception of her sacred weakness, and admiring pride in her more delicate faculties, which are of the highest essence of love.

"I hope you dinna think me a fool altogether," the mistress would answer, with momentary offence; "as if I was thinking of the rain, or as if there was onything but rain to be lookit for! but when I mind that my Colin gangs away the morn—"

And then she took up her basket of mended stockings, and, with a little impatience, to hide a chance drop on her eyelash, carried them away to Colin's room, where his chest stood open and was being packed for the journey. It was not a very long journey, but it was the boy's first outset into independent life; and very independent life was that which awaited the country lad in Glasgow, where he was going to the university. On such a day dark shadows of many a melancholy story floated somehow upon the darkened atmosphere into Mrs. Campbell's mind.

"If we could but have boarded him in a decent family," she said to herself, as she packed her boy's stockings. But it had been "a bad year" at Ramore, and no decent family would have received young Colin for so small a sum as that on which he himself and various more wise advisers considered it possible for him to live, by the help of an occasional hamper of home-produce, in a little lodging of his own. Mrs. Campbell had acceded to this arrangement as the best, but it occurred to her to remember various wrecks she had encountered even in her innocent life; and her heart failed her a little as she leaned over Colin's big "kist."

Colin himself said very little on the subject, though he thought of nothing else; but he was a taciturn Scotch boy, totally unused to disclose his feelings. He was strolling round and round the place with his hands in his pockets, gradually getting soaked by the persistent rain, and rather liking it than otherwise. As he strayed about—having nothing to do that day in consideration of its being his last day at home—Colin's presence was by no means welcomed by the other people about the farm. Of course, being unoccupied himself, he had the sharpest eyes for every blunder that was going on in the stable or the byre, and announced his little discoveries with a charming candor. But in his heart, even at the moment when he was driving Jess to frenzy by uncalled-for remarks touching the dinner of the pigs, Colin was all ablaze with anticipation of the new life that was to begin to-morrow. He thought of it as something grand and complete, not made up of petty details like this life he was leaving. It was a mist of learning, daily stimulation and encounter of wits, with glorious prizes and honors hanging in the hazy distance, which Colin saw as he went strolling about the farmyard in the rain, with his hands in his pockets. If he said anything articulate to

himself on the subject, it was comprised in one succinct, but seemingly inapplicable, statement. "Eton's no a college," he said once, under his breath, with a dark glow of satisfaction on his face as he stopped opposite the door, and cast a glance upon the loch and the boat, which latter was now drawn up high and dry out of reach of the wintry water; and then a cloud suddenly lowered over Colin's face, as a sudden doubt of his own accuracy seized him—a torturing thought which drove him indoors instantly to resolve his doubt by reference to a wonderful old gazetteer which was believed in at Ramore. Colin found it recorded there, to his great mental disturbance, that Eton *was* a college; but, on further inquiry, derived great comfort from knowing that it certainly was not a university, after which he felt himself again at liberty to issue forth and superintend and aggravate all the busy people about the farm.

That night the family supper-table was somewhat dull, notwithstanding the excitement of the boys, for Archie was to accompany his father and brother to Glasgow, and was in great glee over that unusual delight. Mrs. Campbell, for her part, was full of thoughts natural enough to the mother of so many sons. She kept looking at her boys as they sat round the table, absorbed in their supper. "This is the beginning, but wha can tell what may be the end?" she said half to herself; "they'll a' be gane afore we ken what we're doing." Little Johnnie, to be sure, was but six years old; but the mother's imagination leapt over ten years, and saw the house empty, and all the young lives out in the world. "Eh me!" said the reflective woman, "that's what we bring up our bairns for, and rejoice over them as if they were treasure; and then by the time we're auld they're a' gane;" and, as she spoke, not the present shadow only, but legions of vague desolations in the time to come came rolling up like mists upon her tender soul.

"As lang as there's you and me, we'll fend, Jeanie," said the farmer, with a smile; "twa's very good company to my way o' thinking; but there's plenty of time to think about the dispersion which canna take place yet for a year or twa. The boys came into the world to live their ain lives and serve their Maker, and no' just to pleasure you and me. If you've a' done, ye can cry on Jess, and bring out the big Bible, Colin. We maunna miss our prayers to-night."

To tell the truth, Colin of Ramore was not quite so regular in his discharge of this duty as his next neighbor, Eben Campbell of Barnton, thought necessary, and was disapproved of accordingly by that virtuous critic; but the homely little service was perhaps all the more touching on this special occasion, and marked the "night before Colin went first to the college" as a night to be remembered. When his brothers trooped off to bed, Colin remained behind as a special distinction. His mother was sitting by the fire without even her knitting, with her hands crossed in her lap, and clouds of troubled, tender thought veiling her soft eyes. As for the farmer, he sat looking on with a faint gleam of humor in his face. He knew that his wife was going to speak out her anxious heart to her boy, and big Colin's respect for her judgment was just touched by a man's smile at her womanish solemnity, and the great unlikelihood that her innocent advices would have the effect she imagined upon her son's career. But, notwithstanding the smile, big Colin, too, listened with interest to all that his wife had to say.

"Come here and sit down," said Mrs. Campbell; "you needna' think shame of my hand on your head, though you *are* gaun to the college the morn. Eh! Colin, you dinna ken a' the temptations nor the trials. Ye've aye had your ain way at hame—"

Here Colin made a little movement of irrepressible dissent. "I've aye done what I was bidden," said the honest boy. He could not accept that gentle fiction even when his heart was touched by his mother's farewell.

"Weel, weel," said the farmer's wife, with a little sigh; "you've had your ain way as far as it was good for you. But its awfu' different living among strangers, and living in your father's house. Ye'll have to think for yoursel' and take care of yoursel' now. I'm no one to give many advices," said the mother, putting up her hand furtively to her eyes, and looking into the fire till the tears should be re-absorbed which had gathered there. "But I wouldna like my first-born to leave Ramore and think a' was as fair in the world as appears to the common e'e. I've been real weel off a' my days," said the mistress, slowly, letting the tears which she had

restrained before drop freely at this reminiscence of happiness; "a guid father and mother to bring me up, and then *him* there, that's the kindest man! But you and me needna' praise your father, Colin; we can leave that to them that dinna ken," she went on, recovering herself; "but I've had ae trouble for a' so weel as I've been, and I mean to tell you what that is afore you set out in the world for yoursel'."

"Nothing about poor George," said the farmer, breaking in.

"Oh, ay, Colin, just about poor George; I maun speak," said the mistress. "He was far the bonniest o' our family, and the best-likit; and he was to be a minister, laddie, like you. He used to come hame with his prizes, and bring the very sunshine to the auld house. Eh! but my mother was proud; and for me, I thought there was nothing in this world he mightna' do if he likit. Colin," said Mrs. Campbell, with solemn looks, "are ye listening? The last time I saw my brother was in a puir place at Liverpool, a' in rags and dirt, with an auld coat buttoned to his throat, that it mightna' be seen what was wantin', and a' his wild hair hanging about his face, and his feet out o' his shoon, and hunger in his eye—"

"Jeanie, Jeanie, nae mair," said big Colin from the other side of the fire.

"But I maun say mair; I maun tell a'," cried his wife, with tears. "Hunger in his bonnie face, that was ance the blythest in the country-side—no hunger for honest meat as nature might crave, but for a' thing that was unlawfu' and evil and killin' to soul and body. He had to be watched for fear he should spend the hard-won silver that we had a' scraped together to send him away. Him that had been our pride, we couldna trust him, Colin, no ten minutes out o' our sight but he was in some new trouble. It was to Australia we sent him, where a' the unfortunates go. Eh, me! the like o' that ship sailing! If there was a kind o' hope in our breasts it was the hope o' despair. It wasna' my will, for what is there in a new place to make a man reform his ways? And that was how your Uncle George went away."

"And then?" cried the boy, whose interest was raised, and who had heard mysteriously of this Uncle George before.

"We've heard no word from that day to this," said Mrs. Campbell, drying her eyes. "Listen till I tell you a' that his pleasurings brought him to. First, and greatest, to say what was not true, Colin—to deceive them that trusted him. If the day should ever dawn that I couldna trust a bairn o' mine—if it should ever come sickening to my heart that e'e or tongue was false that belonged to me—if I had to watch my laddies, and to stand in doubt at every word they said—eh! Colin, God send I may be in my grave afore such an awfu' fate should come to me!"

Young Colin of Ramore answered not a word; he stared into the fire instead, making horrible faces unawares. He could not have denied, had he been taxed with it, that tears were in his eyes; but rather than shed them he would have endured tortures; and any expression of his feelings in words was more impossible still.

"No as if I was a better woman than my mother, or worthy o' a better fate," said the thoughtful mistress of Ramore; "for she was ane o' the excellent of the earth, as a'body kens; and, if ever a woman won to her rest through great tribulations, she was ane; and, if the Lord sent the cross, he would send the strength to bear it. But, O Colin, my man, it would be kind to drown your mother in the loch, or fell her on the hill, sooner than bring upon her such great anguish and trouble as I have told you of this night!"

"Now, wife," said the farmer, interfering, "you've said your part. Nae such thought is in Colin's head. Gang you and look after his kist, and see that a' thing's right; and him and me will have our crack the time you're away. Your mother's an innocent woman," said big Colin, after a pause, when she had gone away; "she kens nae mair of the world than the bairn on her knee. When you're a man you'll ken the benefit of taking your first notions from a woman like that. No an imagination in her mind but what's good and true. It's hard work fechting through this world without marks o' the battle," said big Colin, with a little pathos; "but a man wi' the like o' *her* by his side maun be ill indeed if he gangs very far wrang. It mightna' be a' to the purpose," continued the farmer, with a little of his half-conscious common-sense superiority, "as appeals to the feelings seldom are; but, Colin, if you take my advice, you'll mind every word of what your mother says."

Colin said not a syllable in reply. He had got rid of the tears safely, which was a great deal gained: they must have fallen had the mistress remained two seconds longer looking at him with her soft, beaming eyes; but he had not quite gulped down yet that climbing sorrow which had him by the throat. Anyhow, even if his voice had been at his own command, he was very unlikely to have made any reply.

"Ye'll find a' strange when ye gang to Glasgow," continued the farmer. "I'm no feared for any great temptation, except idleness, besetting a callant like you; but a man that has his ain bread and his ain way to make in the world has nae time for idleness. You've guid abilities, Colin, and if they dinna come to something you'll have but yoursel' to blame: and I wouldna' put the reproach on my Maker of having framed a useless soul into the world, if I were you," said big Colin. "There's never ony failures that I can see among the lower creation, without some guid reason; but it's the privilege o' men to fail without ony cause o' failure except want o' will to do weel. When ye see the like of George for instance, ye ask what the Lord took the trouble to make such a ne'er-do-weel for?" said the homely philosopher; "I never could help thinking, for my part, that it was labor lost, though nae doubt Providence kent better; but I wouldna' be like that if I could help it. There's no a silly sheep on the hill, nor horse in the stable, that isna' a credit to Him that made it. I would take good heed no to put mysel' beneath the brute beasts, if I were you."

"I'm no meaning," cried Colin, with ungrammatical abruptness and a little offence; for he was pricked in his pride by this address, which was not, according to his father's ideas, any "appeal to his feelings," but a calm and common-sense way of putting an argument before the boy.

"I never said you were," said the farmer. "It'll cost us hard work to keep ye at your studies, and I put it to your honor no to waste your time; and you'll write regular, and mind what kind o' thoughts your mother's thinking at home in Ramore; and I may tell you, Colin, I put confidence in you," said the father, laying his big hand with a heavy momentary pressure upon the lad's shoulder. "Now, good-night, and go to your bed, and prepare for the morn."

Such were the parting advices with which the boy was sent out into the world. His mother was in his room, kneeling before his chest, adding the last particulars to its store, when Colin entered the homely little chamber—but what they said to each other before they parted was for nobody's ear; and the morning was blazing with a wintry brightness, and all the hills standing white against the sky, and the heart of the mistress hopeful as the day, when she wiped off her tears with her apron, and waved her farewell to her boy, as he went off in the little steamer which twice a day thrilled the loch with communications from the world. "He'll come back in the spring," she said to herself, as she went about her homely work, and ordered her household. And so young Colin went forth, all dauntless and courageous, into the great battle-field, to encounter whatsoever conflicts might come to him, and to conquer the big world and all that was therein, in the victorious dreams of his youth.

CHAPTER V.

The first disappointment encountered by the young hero was the wonderful shock of finding out that it was not an abstract world he had to encounter and fight with, but that life was an affair of days and hours exactly as at Ramore, which was about his first real mental experience and discovery. It was a strange mortification to Colin, who was, like his mother, a poet in his soul, to find out that there was nothing abstract in his new existence, but that a perpetually recurring round of lessons to learn, and classes to attend, and meals to eat, made up the days, which were noways changed in their character from those days which he had already known for all the fifteen years of his life. After the first shock, however, he went on with undiminished courage—for at fifteen it is so easy to think that those great hours are waiting for us somewhere in the undisclosed orb of existence. Certainly a time would come when every day, of itself a radiant whole and complete unity, would roll forth majestic like the earth in the mystic atmosphere. He had missed it this time, but after a while it must come; for the future, like the past, works wonders upon the aspect of time; and still it is true of the commonest hours that they—

——" win
A glory from their being far,
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not when we walked therein."

So thought Colin, looking at them from the other side, and seeing a perfection which nobody ever reached in this world. But of course he did not know that—so he postponed those grand days and barred them up with shining doors, on which was written the name and probable date of the next great change in his existence; and, contenting himself for the present with the ordinary hours, went light-hearted enough upon his boyish way.

A little adventure which occurred to the neophyte on his first entrance upon this new scene, produced results for him, however, which are too important to be omitted from his history. Everybody who has been in that dingiest of cities knows that the students at the University of Glasgow, small as their influence is otherwise upon the character of the town, are bound to do it one superficial service at least. Custom has ordained that they should wear red gowns; and the fatigued traveller, weary of the universal leaden gray, can alone appreciate fully the sense of gratitude and relief occasioned by the sudden gleam of scarlet fluttering up the long, unlovely street on a November day. But that artistic sense which penetrates but slowly into barbarous regions has certainly not yet reached the students of Glasgow. So far from considering themselves public benefactors through the medium of their red gowns, there is no expedient of boyish ingenuity to which the ignorant youths will not resort to quench the splendid tint, and reduce its glory as nearly as possible to the sombre hue of everything around. Big Colin of Ramore was unacquainted with the tradition which made a new and brilliant specimen of the academic robe of Glasgow as irritating to the students as the color is supposed to be to other animals of excitable temper; and the good farmer naturally arrayed his son in a new gown, glorious as any new ensign in the first delight of his uniform. As for Colin, he was far from being delighted. The terrible thought of walking through the streets in that blazing costume seriously counterbalanced all the pleasure of independence, and the pride of being "at college." The poor boy slunk along by the least frequented way, and stole into his place the first morning like a criminal. And it was not long before Colin perceived that his new companions were of a similar opinion. There was not another gown so brilliant as his own among them all. The greater part were in the last stage of tatters and dinginess, though among a company, which included a number of lads of Colin's own age, it was evident that there must be many who wore the unvenerated costume for the first time. Dreams of rushing to the loch, which had been his immediate resource all his life hitherto, and soaking the obnoxious wrapper in the salt-water, confused his mind; but he was not prepared for the summary measures which were in contemplation. As soon as Colin emerged out of the shelter of the class-room, his persecution commenced. He was mobbed, hustled, pelted, until his spirit was roused. The gown was odious enough; but Colin was not the lad to have even the thing he most wanted imposed upon him by force. As soon as he was aware of the meaning of his tormentors, the country boy stood up for his gown. He gathered the glowing folds round him, and struck out fiercely, bringing down one of his adversaries. Colin, however, was alone against a multitude; and what might have happened either to himself or his gown it would have been difficult to predict, had not an unexpected defender come in to the rescue. Next to Colin in the class-room a man of about twice his age had been seated—a man of thirty, whose gaunt shoulders brushed the boy's fair locks, and whose mature and thoughtful head rose strangely over the young heads around. It was he who strode through the ring, and dispersed Colin's adversaries.

"For shame o' yourselves!" he said in a deep bass voice, which contrasted wonderfully with the young falsettoes round him. "Leave the laddie alone; he knows no better. I'll lick ye a' for a set of schoolboys, if you don't let him be! Here, boy, take off the red rag and throw it to me," said Colin's new champion; but the Campbell blood was up.

"I'll no take it off," cried Colin; "it's my ain, and I'll wear it if I like; and I'll fell anybody that meddles with me!"

Upon which, as was natural, a wonderful scuffle ensued. Colin never knew perfectly how he was extricated from this alarming

situation ; but, when he came to himself, he was in the streets on his way home, with his new friend by his side—very stiff and aching in every limb, with one sleeve of his gown torn out, and its glory minished by the mud which had been thrown at it, but still held tightly as he had gathered it round him at the first affray. When he recovered so far as to hear some sound besides his own panting breath, Colin discovered that the gaunt giant by his side was preaching at him in a leisurely, reflective way from his eminence of six feet two or three. Big Colin of Ramore was but six feet, and at that altitude two or three inches tell. The stranger looked gigantic in his lean length as the boy looked up, half-wondering, half-defiant, to hear what he was saying. What he said sounded wonderfully like preaching, so high up and so composed was the voice which kept on arguing over Colin's head, with an indifference to whether he listened or not, which, in ordinary conversation, is somewhat rare to see.

"It might be right to stand up for your gown ; I'll no commit myself to say," was the first sentence of the discourse which fell on Colin's ear ; "for there's no denying it was your own, and a man, or even a callant, according to the case in point, has a right to wear what he likes, if he's no under lawful authority, nor the garment offensive to decency ; but it would have been more prudent on the present occasion to have taken off the red rag as I advised. It's a remnant of superstition in itself, and I'm no altogether sure that my conscience, if it was put to the question, would approve of wearing gowns at all, unless, indeed, it had ceased to be customary to wear other garments ; but that's an unlikely case, and I would not ask you to take it into consideration," said the calm voice, half a mile over Colin's head. "It's a kind of relic of the monastic system, which is out of accordance with modern ideas ; but, as you're no old enough to have any opinions—"

"I have as good a right to have opinions as you!" exclaimed Colin, promptly, glad of an opportunity to contradict and defy somebody, and get rid of the fumes of his excitement.

"That's no the subject under discussion," said the stranger. "I never said any man had a right to opinions ; I incline to the other side of that question mysel'. The thing we were arguing was the gown. A new red gown is as aggravating to the students of Glasgow University as if they were so many bulls—no that I mean to imply that they're anything so forcible. You'll have to yield to the popular superstitions if you would live in peace."

"I'm no heeding about living in peace," interrupted Colin. "I'm no feared. It's naebody's business but my ain. My gown is my gown, and I'll no change it if—"

"Let me speak," said his new friend ; "you're terrible talkative for a callant. Where do you live? I'll go home with ye and argue the question. Besides, you've got a knock on the head there that wants looking to, and I suppose you're in Glasgow by yourself? You needna' thank me, it's no necessary," said the stranger, with a bland movement of the hand.

"I wasna' meaning to thank you. I'm living in Donaldson's Land, and I can take care of myself," said Colin. But the boy was no match for his experienced classfellow, who went on calmly preaching as before, arguing all kinds of questions, till the two arrived at the foot of the stairs which led to Colin's humble lodging. The stair was long, narrow, and not very clean. It bore stains of spilt milk on one flight, and long droppings of water on another ; and all the miscellaneous smells of half a dozen different households, none of them particularly dainty in their habits, were caught and concentrated in the deep well of a staircase, into which they all opened. Colin's abode was at the very top. His landlady was a poor widow, who had but three rooms, and a host of children. The smallest of the three rooms was let to Colin, and in the other two she put up somchow her own sons and daughters, and did her mantua-making, and accomplished her humble cookery. The rooms had sloping roofs and attic windows ; and two chairs and a slip of carpet made Colin's apartment splendid. Colin led the way for his "friend," not without a slight sentiment of pride, which had taken the place of his first annoyance. After all, it was imposing to his imagination to have his society sought by another student, a man so much older than himself ; and Colin was not unaware of the worship which it would gain for him in the eyes of his hostess, who had looked on him dubiously on the day of his arrival, and designated him "little mair

than a bairn." Colin was very gracious in doing the honors of his room to his unsolicited visitor, and spoke loud out that Mrs. Fergus might hear. "You'll have to stoop when you go in at *that* door," said the boy, already learning with natural art to shine in reflected glory. But Colin was less complacent when they had entered the room, half from natural shyness, half from an equally natural defiance and opposition to the grown-up and experienced person who had escorted him home.

"Well," said this strange personage, stooping grimly to contemplate himself in the little square of looking-glass which hung over Colin's table; "you and me are no very like classfellows; but I like a laddie that has some spirit and stands up for his rights. Of course you come from the country; but first come here, my boy, before you answer any questions, and let me see that knock on your head."

"I had nae intention of answering any questions; and I can take care of myself," answered Colin, hanging back and declining the invitation. The stranger, however, only smiled, stretched out his long arm, and drew the boy towards him. And certainly he had received a cut on the head which required to be attended to. Reluctant as he was, the lad was too shy to make any active resistance, even if he had possessed moral courage enough to oppose successfully the will of a man so much older than himself. He submitted to have the cut bathed and plastered up, which his new friend did with the utmost tenderness, delivering a slow and lengthy address all the while over his head. When the operation was over, Colin was more and more perplexed what to do with his visitor; though a little faint after his fight and excitement, he was still well enough to be very hungry, but the idea of asking this unknown friend to share his dinner did not occur to him. He had never done anything beyond launching the boat, or mounting the horses on his own responsibility before, and he could not tell what Mrs. Fergus would think of his wound or his visitor. Altogether Colin was highly perplexed and not over civil, and sat down upon the edge of a chair facing the intruder with an expression of countenance very plainly intimating that he thought him much in the way.

But the stranger was much above any consideration of Colin's countenance. He was very tall, as we have said, very gaunt and meagre, with a long, pale face surmounted by black locks, thin and dishevelled. He had a black beard, too—a thing much less common at that time than now—which increased his general aspect of dishevelment. His eyes were large, and looked larger from the great sockets hollowed out by something more than years, from which they looked out as from two pale caverns; and, with all this gauntness of aspect, his smile, when he smiled, which was seldom, threw a wonderful light over his face, and reminded Colin somehow, he could not tell how, of the sudden gleam of the sun over the Holy Loch when the clouds were at the darkest, and melted the boy's heart in spite of himself.

"I was saying we were not very like classfellows," said the stranger; "that's a queer feature in our Scotch colleges; there's you, a great deal too young, and me a great deal too old; and here we meet for the same purpose, to learn two dead languages and some sciences that are only half living; and that's the only way for either you or me to get ourselves made ministers. The English system's an awful deal better, I'm meaning in theory—as for the practice, that's neither here nor there. Nothing's right in practice. It's a great thing to have a right idea at the bottom if you can."

"Are you to be a minister?" said Colin, not well knowing what to say.

"When I was like you I thought so," said his new friend; "it's a long time since then; but, when I get a good grip of an idea, it's no' easy to get it out of my head again. This is my second session only, for all that," he said, after a momentary pause; "many a thing I little thought of has stood in my way. I'm little further on than you, though I suppose I'm twice your age; but to be sure you are far too young for the college; that's what the Greek professor in Edinburgh is aye havering about; he might turn to the other side of the question if he knew me." And the stranger interrupted his own monologue to give vent to a long-drawn breath, by way of a sigh, which agitated the atmosphere in Colin's little room, as if it had been a sudden breeze.

"Mr. Hardie's son was only thirteen when he went to the college; and that's two years younger than me," said Colin, with some indignation. The lad heard a sound, as of

knives and plates, outside, and pricked up his ears. He was hungry, and his strange visitor seemed rooted upon his hard, rush-bottomed chair. But, just as Colin's mind was framing this thought, his companion suddenly gathered himself up, rising in folds, as if there was never to be an end of him.

"You want your dinner?" he said; "come with me, it will do you good. What you were to have will keep till to-morrow; tell the decent woman so, and come with me. I'm poor, but you shall have something you can eat, and I'll show you what to do when you are tired of *her* provisions; so come along."

"I would rather stay at home," said Colin; "I don't know you; I don't know even your name," he added a minute after, feeling that he was about to yield to the strong influence which was upon him, and doing what he could to save himself.

"My name's Lauderdale; that's easy settled," said the stranger; "tell the honest woman; what's her name?—I'll do it for you. Mrs. Fergus, my young friend here is going to dinner with me. He'll be back by and by to his studies; and, in the mean time," said Colin's self-constituted guardian, putting the lad before him and pausing in the passage to speak to the widow, who regarded his great height and strange appearance with a little curiosity, "take you charge of his gown; put it up the chimney, or give it a good wash out with soap and soda; it's too grand for Glasgow College; the sooner it comes to be like this," said the gigantic visitor, holding up his own, which was of a dingy port-wine color, "the better for the boy."

And then Colin found himself again walking along the Glasgow streets, in the murky, early twilight of that November afternoon, with this strange, unknown figure which was leading him he knew not whither. Was it a good or a bad angel which had thus taken possession of the fresh life and unoccupied mind? Colin could not resist the fascination which was half dislike and half admiration. He went along quietly by the side of the tall student, who kept delivering over his head that flood of monotonous talk. The boy grew interested even in the talk before they had gone far, and went on, a little anxious about his dinner, but still more curious concerning the companion with whom fate had provided him so soon.

CHAPTER VI.

"No that I mean to say I believe in fate," said Lauderdale, when they had finished their meal; "though there is little doubt in my mind that what happens is ordained. I couldna tell why, for my part, though I believe in the fact—for most things in life come to nothing, and the grandest train of causes produce nae effect whatever; that's my experience. Indeed, it's often a wonder to me," said the homely philosopher, who was not addressing himself particularly to Colin, "what the Almighty took the trouble to make man for at a'. He's a poor creature at the best, and gives an awfu' deal of trouble for very little good. Considering all things, I'm of opinion that we're little better than an experiment,—and very likely we've been greatly improved upon in mair recent creations. Are you pleased with your dinner? You're young now, and canna' have much standing against you in the great books. Do you ever think, laddie, of what you mean to be?"

"I mean to be a minister," said Colin, with a furious blush. His thoughts on the subject, if he could but have expressed them, were magnificent enough, but nothing was more impossible to the shy country lad than to explain the ambition which glowed in his eager, visionary mind. He would have sacrificed a finger at any time, rather than talk of the vague but splendid intentions which were fermenting secretly in absolute silence within his reserved Scotch bosom. His new friend looked with a little curiosity at the subdued brightness of the boy's eyes, which spoke more emphatically than his words.

"They a' mean to be ministers," said Lauderdale, in his reflective way; "half of them would do far better to be cobblers; but nae fool could ever be persuaded. As for you, I think there's something in you, or I wouldna have fashed my head about you and your gown. You've got a fair start, and nae drawbacks. I would like to see you go straight forward, and be good for something in your generation. You needna look glum at me; I'll never be good for much mysel'. You see I've learned to be fond of talking," he said, philosophically; "and a man that

takes up that line early in life seldom comes to much good; though I grant you there's exceptions, like Macaulay, for example. I was just entered at college, when my father died," he continued, falling into a historical strain. "I was only a laddie like yoursel', but I had to give up that thought, and work to help the rest. Now they are all scattered, and my mother dead, and I'm my own master. No that I'm much the better for that; but, you see, after I got this situation—"

"What situation?" said Colin, quickly.

"Oh, an honorable occupation," said his tall friend, with a gradually brightening smile. "There's ane of the same trade mentioned with commendation in the Acts of the Apostles. Him and St. Paul were great friends. But you see I'm free for the most part of the day; and, it being a fixed idea in my mind that I was to go to the college some time or other, it was but natural that I should enter mysel' as soon as I was able. I may go forward, and I may not; it depends on the world more than on me. So your name's Colin Campbell?—the same as Sir Colin; but if you're to be a minister, you can never be anything mair than a minister. In any other line of life a lad can rise if he likes, but there's nae promotion possible to a minister. If I were you and fifteen, I would choose another trade."

To this Colin answered nothing; the suggestion staggered him considerably, and he was not prepared with anything to say. He looked round the shabby room, and watched the shabby tavern-waiter carrying his dinner to some other customer; and Colin's new unaccustomed eyes saw something imposing even in the aspect of this poor place. He thought of the great world which seemed to surge outside in a ceaseless roar, coming and going—the world in which all sorts of honors and powers seemed to go begging, seeking owners worthy to possess them; and he was pursuing this splendid chain of possibilities, when Lauderdale resumed his monologue:—

"The Kirk's in a queer kind of condition a'thegither," said the tall student, "so are most Kirks. Whenever you hit upon a man that kens what he wants, all's well; but that happens seldom. It's no my case for one. And as for you, you're no at the age to trouble your head about doctrine. You're a young prince at your years—you don't know your privileges; you believe everything you've been brought up to believe, and are far more sure in your own mind what's false and what's true than a college of doctors. I would rather be you than a' the philosophers in the world."

"I'm no a fool to believe everything," said Colin, angrily rousing himself up from his dreams.

"No," said his companion, "far from a fool; it's true wisdom, if you could but keep it. But the present temper of the world," said the philosopher, calmly, "is to conclude that there's nothing a'thegither false, and few things particularly true. When you're tired of the dinners in Donaldson's Land," he continued, without any change of tone, "and from the looks of the honest woman I would not say much for the cookery, you can come and get your dinner here. In the mean time, I'll take ye up to Buchanan Street, if you like. It's five o'clock, and the shop-windows are lighted by this time. I'm very fond of the lights in the shop-windows mysel'. When I've been a poor laddie about the streets, the lights aye looked friendly, which is more than the folk within do when you've no siller. Come along; it's no trouble to me, and I like to have somebody to talk to," said Lauderdale.

Colin got up very reluctantly, feeling himself unable to resist the strange personal fascination thus exercised over him. The idea of being only somebody to talk to mortified the boy's pride, but he could not shake himself free from the influence which had taken possession of him. He was only fifteen, and his companion was thirty; and the shy country lad had no power to enfranchise himself. He went after the tall figure into the street with very mingled feelings. The stream of talk, which kept flowing on above him, stimulated Colin's mind into the most vigorous action. Such talk was not incomprehensible to a boy who had been trained at Ramore; but the philosphers of the Holy Loch were orthodox, and this specimen of impartial thoughtfulness roused all the fire of youthful polemics in Colin's bosom. He set down his companion unhesitatingly, of course, as a "sceptic," perhaps an infidel; and was almost longing to rush in upon him, with arbitrary boyish zeal and disdain, to make an end on the spot of his mistaken opinions. As for Colin himself, he was very sure of everything,

as was natural to his years, and had never entertained any doubts that the Shorter Catechism was as infallible a standard of truth as it was a terrible infliction upon the youthful memory. Colin went along the murky streets, by his companion's side, thinking within himself that, perhaps, his own better arguments and higher reason might convert this mistaken man, and so listened to him eagerly as they proceeded together along the long line of the Trongate, much excited by his own intentions, and feeling somehow, in his boyish heart, that this universal stimulation of everything, within and without, was a real beginning of life. For everything was new to the country boy, who had never in his life before been out of doors at night anywhere, save in the silent country roads, through darkness lighted by the moon, or, when there was no moon, by the pale glimmer of the loch. Now his eyes were dazzled by the lights, and all his senses kept in exercise by the necessity of holding his own way, and resisting the pressure of the human current which flowed past him; while Lauderdale kept talking of a hundred things which were opposed to the belief of the lad, and which, amid all this unaccustomed hubbub, he had to listen to with all his might lest he should lose the thread of the argument—a loose thread enough, certainly, but still with some coherence and connection. All this made Colin's heart thrill with a warmer consciousness of life. He was only in Glasgow, among floods of dusky craftsmen going home from their work; but it appeared to his young eyes that he had suddenly fallen upon the most frequented ways of life and into the heart of the vast world.

"I'm fond of a walk in the Trongate mysel', especially when the lamps are lighted," said Lauderdale; "I never heard of a philosopher but was. No that I am a philosopher, but— It's here ye see the real aspect of human affairs. Here, take the shop-windows, or take the passengers, there's little to be seen but what's necessary to life; but yonder," said the reflective student, pointing over Colin's head to the street they were approaching, "there's nothing but luxury. We spend a great deal of siller in Glasgow—we're terrible rich, some of us, and like the best of everything—but there's no so much difference as you would think. I have no pleasure in this side of wealth for my part; there's an awful suggestion of eating and drinking in everything about here. Even the grand furniture and the pictures have a kind of haze about them, as if ye could only see them through a dinner. I don't pretend to have any knowledge for my own part of rich men's feasts; but it's no pleasant to think that Genius and Art, no to speak of a great deal of skilful workmanship, should be all subservient to a man's pleasure in his dinner, and that *that's* what they're here for. Hallo, laddie, I thought you had no friends in Glasgow? there's somebody yonder waving their hands to you. What do you hang back for? It's a lady in a carriage. Have you no respect for yoursel' that you're so slow to answer?" cried Colin's monitor, indignantly. Colin would gladly have sunk through the pavement, or darted up a friendly dark alley which presented itself close by, but such an escape was not possible. It was Lady Frankland who was making signals to him out of the carriage-window; and in all his awkwardness, he was obliged to obey them.

As for Lauderdale, whose curiosity was considerably excited, he betook himself to the window of a printshop to await his *protégé*, not without some surprise in his mind. He knew pretty nearly as much about Colin by this time as the boy himself did, though Colin was quite unaware of having opened up his personal history to his new friend; but he had heard nothing about young Frankland, that being an episode in his life of which the country lad was not proud. Lauderdale stood at the printshop window with a curious kind of half-pathetic egotism mingling with his kindly observation. No fair vision of women ever gleamed across *his* firmament. He was just about shaking hands with youth, and no lady's face had ever bent over him like a star out of the firmament, as the gracious countenance of the English lady was just then bending over the farmer's son from Ramore. "It's maybe the duchess," said Lauderdale to himself, thinking of the natural feudal princess of the lochs; and he looked with greater interest still, withdrawn out of hearing, but near enough to see all that passed. Colin for his part did not know in the least what to say or to do. He stood before the carriage looking sulky in the excess of his embarrassment, and did not even take off his cap to salute the lady, as country politeness and his anxious mother had

taught him. And, to aggravate the matter, there was a bewildering little girl in the carriage with Lady Frankland—a creature with glorious curls over her shoulders, and a wonderful perfection of juvenile toilette, which somehow dazzled Colin's unused and ignorant eyes. In the midst of his awkwardness it occurred to the boy to note this little lady's dress, which was a strange thing enough for him, who did not know one article of feminine attire from another. It was not her beauty so much as the delicacy of all her little equipments which amazed Colin, and prevented him from hearing what Lady Frankland had to say.

"So you have gone to the university?" said that gracious lady. "You are ever so much further advanced than Harry, who is only a schoolboy as yet: but the Scotch are so clever. You will be glad to hear that dear Harry is quite well, and enjoying himself very much at Eton," continued Harry's mother, who meant to be very kind to the boy who had saved her son's life. Now the very name of Harry Frankland had, he could not have told how, a certain exasperating effect upon Colin. He said nothing in answer to the gracious intelligence, but unconsciously gave a little frown of natural opposition, which Lady Frankland's eyes were not sufficiently interested to see.

"He doesn't care for Harry, aunt," said the miniature woman by Lady Frankland's side, darting out of the dusky twilight a sudden flash of perception, under which Colin stood convicted. She was several years younger than he, but a world in advance of him in every other respect. A little amusement and a little offence were in the voice, which seemed to Colin, with its high-bred accent and wonderful "English," like the voice of another kind of creature from any he had encountered before. Was she a little witch, to know what he was thinking? And then a little laugh of triumph rounded off the sentence, and the unfortunate boy stood more speechless, more awkward, more incapable than before.

"Nonsense, Matty; when you know we owe Harry's life to him," said bland Lady Frankland. "You must come and dine with us to-morrow; indeed you must. Sir Thomas and I are both so anxious to know more of you. Sir Thomas would be so pleased to forward your views in any way; but the Scotch are so independent," she said, with her most flattering smile. "Was that your tutor who was walking with you, that very tall man? I am sure we should be delighted to see him too. I suppose he is something in the university. Oh! here comes my husband. Sir Thomas this is—oh! I am sure I beg your pardon; I forgot your name—the dear, brave, excellent boy who saved Harry's life."

Upon which Sir Thomas, coming out of one of the shops, in that radiance of cleanness and neatness, perfectly brushed whiskers, and fresh face, which distinguishes his class, shook hands heartily with the reluctant Colin.

"To be sure, he must dine with us to-morrow," said the good-humored baronet, "and bring his tutor if he likes; but I thought you had no tutors at the Scotch universities. I want to know what you're about, and what your ideas are on a great many subjects, my fine fellow. Your father is tremendously proud, and so are you, I suppose; but he's a capital specimen of a man, and I hope you allow that I have a right to recollect such an obligation. Good-by, my boy," said Sir Thomas. "Seven to-morrow—but I'll probably be at your college and see you in the morning. And mind you bring the tutor," he cried, as the carriage drove off. Lady Frankland shed a perfect blaze of smiles upon Colin, as she waved her hand to him, and the creature with the curls on the other side gave the boy a little nod in a friendly, condescending way. He made a spring back into the shade the minute after, wonderfully glad to escape, but dazzled and excited in spite of himself; and, as he retired rapidly from the scene of this unexpected encounter, he came sharp up against Lauderdale, who was coming to meet him, with his curiosity largely excited.

"It was me he took for the tutor, I suppose?" said the strange mentor who had thus taken possession of Colin; and the tall student laughed with a kind of quaint gratification. "And so I might have been if I had been bred up at Oxford or Cambridge," he added, after a moment; "that is to say, if it had been my lot to have been bred up anywhere; but they've a grand system in these English universities. *That* was not the duke?" he said interrogatively, looking at Colin, whose blood of clansman boiled at the idea.

"*That* the duke!' exclaimed the boy with great disdain; "no more than I am. It's one of the English that are aye coming and making their jokes about the rain; as if anybody wanted them to come," said Colin, with an outbreak of scorn; and then the boy remembered that Archie Candlish had just bought a house in expectation of such visitors, and stopped abruptly in full career. "I suppose the English are awfu' fond of grouse, or they wouldna' come so far for two or three birds," he continued, in a tone of milder sarcasm. But his companion was not to be so easily diverted from his questions.

"Grouse is a grand institution, and helps in the good government of this country," said Lauderdale, "and, through this country, of the world—which is a fine thought for a bit winged creature, if it had the sense to ken. Yon's another world," he said, after a little pause, "no Paradise to be sure, but something as far removed from this as heaven itself; farther, you might say, for there's many a poor man down below here that's hovering on the edge of heaven. And how came you to have such grand friends?" asked the self-constituted guardian, stooping from his lofty height to look straight into Colin's eyes. After a time he extracted the baldest narrative that ever was uttered by a hero ashamed of his prowess from the half-indignant boy, and managed to guess as clearly as the wonderful little lady in the carriage the nature of Colin's sentiments towards the young antagonist and rival whom he had saved.

"I wouldna have let a dog drown," said the aggrieved Colin; "there was nothing to make a work about. But you would have laughed to see that fellow, with his boots like a lassie's and feared to wet his feet. He could swim, though," added the boy, candidly; "and I would like to beat him," he said, after a moment: "I'd like to run races with him for something, and win the prize over his head."

This was all Colin permitted himself to say; but the vehement sentiment thus recalled to his mind made him, for the moment, less attentive to Lauderdale, who, for his part, was considerably moved by his young companion's excitement. "I'm not going to see your fine friends," he said, as he parted from the boy at the "stairfoot" which led to Colin's lodging; "but there's many a true word spoken in jest, and, my boy, you shall not want a tutor, though there's no such thing in our Scotch colleges."

When he had said so much, hastily, as a man does who is conscious of having shown a little emotion in his words, Colin's new friend went away, disappearing through the misty night, gaunt and lean as another Quixote. "I should like to have something to do with the making of a new life," he said to himself, muttering high up in the air over the ordinary passengers' heads, as he mused on upon his way. And Colin and his story had struck the rock in the heart of the lonely man, and drawn forth fresh streams in that wilderness. He was more moved in his imaginative, reflective soul, than he could have told any one, with, half-consciously to himself, a sense of contrast, which was natural enough, considering all things, and which colored all his thoughts, more or less, for that night.

As for Colin—naturally, too—he thought no more of Lauderdale, nor of his parting words, and found himself in no need of any tutor or guide, but fell aslcep in the midst of his Greek, as was to be expected, and dreamt of that creature with the curls nodding at him out of gorgeous lord mayor's coaches, in endless procession. And it was with this wonderful little vision dancing about his fancy that the Scotch boy ended his first day at the university, knowing no more what was to come of it all than the saucy sparrow which woke him next morning by loud chirping in the Glasgow dialect at his quaint little attic window. The sparrow had his crumbs, and Colin had another exciting day before him, and went out quite calmly to lay his innocent hands upon the edge-tools which were to carve out his life.

PART III.—CHAPTER VII.

WONDERS come natural at fifteen; the farmer's son of Ramore, though a little dazzled at the moment, was by no means thrown off his balance by the flattering attentions of Lady Frankland, who said everything that was agreeable and forgot that she had said it, and went over the same ground again half a dozen times, somewhat to the contempt of Colin, who knew nothing about fine ladies, but had all a boy's disdain for a silly woman. Thanks to his faculty of silence, and his intense pride, Colin conducted himself with great external propriety when he dined with his new friends. Nobody knew the fright he was in, nor the strain of determination not to commit himself, which was worthy of something more important than a dinner. But after all, though it shed a reflected glory over his path for a short time, Sir Thomas Frankland's dinner and all its bewildering accessories was but an affair of a day, and the only real result it left behind was a conviction in the mind of Lauderdale that his young *protégé* was born to better fortune. From that day the tall student hovered, benignly reflective, like a tall genie over Colin's boyish career. He was the boy's tutor so far as that was possible where the teacher was himself but one step in advance of the pupil; and as to matters speculative and philosophical, Lauderdale's monologue, delivered high up in the air over his head, became the accompaniment and perpetual stimulation of all Colin's thoughts. The training was strange, but by no means unnatural, nor out of harmony with the habits of the boy's previous life, for much homely philosophy was current at Ramore, and Colin had been used to receive all kinds of comments upon human affairs with his daily bread. Naturally enough, however, the sentiments of thirty and those of fifteen were not always harmonious, and the impartial and tolerant thoughtfulness of his tall friend much exasperated Colin in the absolutism of his youth.

"I'm a man of the age," Lauderdale would say, as they traversed the crowded streets together; "by which I am claiming no superiority over you, callant, but far the contrary, if you were but wise enough to ken. I've fallen into the groove like the rest of mankind, and think in limits as belongs to my century—which is but a poor half-and-half kind of century, to say the best of it—but you are of all the ages, and know nothing about limits or possibilities. Don't interrupt me," said the placid giant; "you are far too talkative for a laddie, as I have said before. I tell you I'm a man of the age: I've no very particular faith in anything. In a kind of a way, everything's true; but you needna tell me that a man that believes like *that* will never make much mark in this world or any other world I ever heard tell of. I know that a great deal better than you do. The best thing you can do is to contradict me; it's good for you, and it does me no harm."

Colin acted upon this permission to the full extent of all his youthful prowess and prejudices, and went on learning his Latin and Greek, and discussing all manner of questions in heaven and earth, with the fervor of a boy and a Scotsman. They kept together, this strange pair, for the greater part of the short winter days, taking long walks, when they left the university, through the noisy, dirty streets, upon which Lauderdale moralized; and sometimes through the duller squares and crescents of respectability which formed the frame of the picture. Sometimes their peregrinations concluded in Colin's little room, when they renewed their arguments over the oat-cakes and cheese which came in periodical hampers from Ramore; and sometimes Lauderdale gave his *protégé* a cheap and homely dinner at the tavern where they had first broken bread together. But not even Colin, much less any of his less familiar acquaintances, knew where the tall mentor lived, or how he managed to maintain himself at college. He said he had his lodging provided for him, when any inquiry was made, and added, with an odd, humorous look, that his was an honorable occupation; but Lauderdale afforded no further clue to his own means or dwelling-place. He smiled, but he was secret and gave no sign. As for his studies, he made but such moderate progress in them as was natural to his age and his character. No particular spur of ambition seemed to stimulate the man whose habits were formed by this time, and who found enjoyment enough, it appeared, in universal speculation. When he failed, his reflections as to the effect of failure upon the mind of man, and the secondary importance after all of mere material success, "which always turns out more disappointing to a reflective spirit than an actual

break-down," the philosopher would say, "being aye another evidence how far reality falls short of the idea," became more piquant than usual; and when he succeeded, the same sentiments moderated his satisfaction. "Oh ay, I've got the prize," he said, holding it on a level with Colin's head, and regarding its resplendent binding with a smile; "which is to say, I've found out that it's only a book with the college arms stamped upon it, and no a palpable satisfaction to the soul as I might have imagined it to be, had it been yours, boy, instead of mine."

But with all this composure of feeling as respected his own success, Lauderdale was as eager as a boy about the progress of his pupil. When the prize lay in Colin's way, his friend spared no pains to stimulate and encourage and help him on; and as years passed, and the personal pride of the elder became involved in the success of the younger, Lauderdale's anxieties awoke a certain impatience in the bosom of his *protégé*. Colin was ambitious enough in his own person; but he turned naturally with sensitive boyish pride against the arguments and inducements which had so little influence upon the speaker himself.

"You urge *me* on," said the country lad; "but you think it does not matter for yourself." And though it was Colin's third session, and he reckoned himself a man, he was jealous to think that Lauderdale urged upon him what he did not think it worth his while to practise in his own person.

"When a thing's spoilt in the making, it matters less what use ye put it to," said the philosopher. It was a bright day in March, and they were seated on the grass together in a corner of the green, looking at the pretty groups about, of women and children—children and women, perhaps not over-tidy, if you looked closely into the matter, but picturesque to look at—some watching the patches of white linen bleaching on the grass, some busily engaged over their needlework, and all of them occupied:—it was comfortable to think they could escape from the dingy "closes" and unsavory "lands" of the neighborhood. The tall student stretched his long limbs on the grass, and watched the people about with reflective eyes. "There's nothing in this world so important to a man as a right beginning," he went on. "As for me, I'm all astray, and can never win to any certain end—no that I'm complaining, or taking a gloomy view of things in general; I'm just as happy in my way as other folk are in theirs—but that's no the question under discussion. When a man reaches my years without coming to anything, he'll never come to much all his days; but you're only a callant, and have all the world before you," said Lauderdale. He did not look at Colin as he spoke, but went on in his usual monotone, looking into the blue air, in which he saw much that was not visible to the eager young eyes which kept gazing at him. "When I was like you," he continued, with a half-pathetic, half-humorous smile, "it looked like misery and despair to feel that I was not to get my own way in this world. I'm terribly indifferent now-a-days—one kind of life is just as good as another as long as a man has something to do that he can think to be his duty; but such feelings are no for you," said Colin's tutor, waking up suddenly. "For you, laddie, there's nothing grand in the world that should not be possible. The lot that's accomplished is aye more or less a failure; but there's always something splendid in the life that is to come."

"You talk to me as if I were a child!" said Colin, with a little indignation; "you see things in their true light yourself; but you treat me like a baby. What can there be that is splendid in my life?—a farmer's son, with perhaps the chance of a country church for my highest hope—after all kinds of signings and confessions and calls and presbyteries. It would be splendid, indeed," said the lad, with boyish contempt, "to be plucked by a country presbytery that don't know six words of Greek, or objected to by a congregation of ploughmen. That's all a man has to look for in the Church of Scotland, and you know it, Lauderdale, as well as I do."

Colin broke off suddenly, with a great deal of heat and impatience. He was eighteen, and he was of the advanced party, the Young Scotland of his time. The dogmatic Old Scotland, which loved to bind and limit, and make confessions and sign the same, belonged to the past centuries. As for Colin's set, they were "viewy" as the young men at Oxford used to be in the days of Froude and Newman. Colin's own "views" were of a vague description enough, but of the most revolutionary tendency. He did not

believe in Presbytery, nor in that rule of Church government which in Scotland is known as Lord Aberdeen's Act; and his ideas respecting extempore worship and common prayers were much unsettled. But as neither Colin nor his set had any distinct model to fall back upon, nor any clear perception of what they wanted, the present result of their enlightenment was simply the unpleasant one of general discontent with existing things, and a restless contempt for the necessary accessories of their lot.

"'Plucked' is no a word in use in Scotland," said Lauderdale; "it smacks of the English universities, which are altogether a different matter. As for the Westminster Confession, I'm no clear that I could put my name to that myself as my act and deed—but you are but a callant, and don't know your own mind as yet. Meaning no offence to you," he continued, waving his hand to Colin, who showed signs of impatience, "I was once a laddie myself. Between eighteen and eight-and-twenty you'll change your ways of thinking, and neither you nor me can prophesy what they'll end in. As for the congregation of ploughmen, I would be very easy about you if that was the worst danger. Men that are about day and night in the fields when all's still, cannot but have thoughts in their minds now and then. But it's no what you are going to be, I'm thinking of," said Colin's counsellor, raising himself from the grass with a spark of unusual light in his eyes, "but what you *might* be, laddie. It's no a great preacher, far less what they call a popular minister, that would please me. What I'm thinking of is, the Man that is aye to be looked for, but never comes. I'm speaking like a woman, and thinking like a woman," he said, with a smile; "they have a kind of privilege to keep their ideal. For my part, I ought to have more sense, if experience counted for anything; but I've no faith in experience. And, speaking of that," said the philosopher, dropping back again softly on the greensward, "what a grand outlet for what I'm calling the ideal was that old promise of the Messiah who was to come! It may still be so for anything I can tell, though I cannot say that I put much trust in the Jews. But aye to be able to hope that the next new soul might be the one that was above failure must have been a wonderful solace to those that had failed and lost heart. To be sure, they missed him when he came," continued Lauderdale; "that was natural. Human nature is aye defective in action; but a grand idea like that makes all the difference between us and the beasts, and would do, if there were a hundred theories of development, which I would not have you put faith in, laddie," continued the volunteer tutor. "Steam and iron make awful progress, but no man—"

"That is one of your favorite theories," said Colin, who was ready for any amount of argument; "though iron and steam are dead and stationary, but for the Mind which is always developing. What you say is a kind of paradox; but you like paradoxes, Lauderdale."

"Everything's a paradox," said the reflective giant, getting up slowly from the turf. "The grass is damp, and the wind's cold, and I don't mean to sit here and haver nonsense any longer. Come along, and I'll see you home. What I like women for is, that they're seldom subject to the real, or convinced by what you callants call reason. Reason and reality are terrible fictions at the bottom. I more believe in facts, for my part. The worst of it is, that a woman's ideal is apt to look a terrible idiot when she sets it up before the world," continued Lauderdale, his face brightening gradually with one of his slow smiles. "The ladies' novels are instructive on that point. But there's few things in this world so pleasant as to have a woman at hand that believes in you," he said, suddenly breaking off in his discourse at an utterly unexpected moment. Colin was startled by the unlooked-for silence, and by the sound of something like a sigh which disturbed the air over his head, and being still but a boy, and not superior to mischief, looked up, with a little laughter.

"You must have once had a woman who believed in you, or you would not speak so feelingly," said the lad, in his youthful amusement; and then Colin, too, stopped short, having encountered quite an unaccustomed look in his companion's face.

"Ay," said Lauderdale, and then there was a pause. "If it were not that life is aye a failure, there would be some cases harder than could be borne," he continued, after a moment; "no that I'm complaining; but if I were you, laddie, I would set my

face dead against fortune, and make up my mind to win. And speaking of winning, when did you hear of your grand English friends, and the callant you picked out of the loch? Have they ever been here in Glasgow again?"

At which question Colin drew himself to his full height, as he always did at Harry Frankland's name; he was ashamed now to express his natural antagonism to the English lad in frank speech as he had been used to do, but he insensibly elevated his head, which, when he did not stoop, as he had a habit of doing, began to approach much more nearly than of old to the altitude of his friend's.

"I know nothing about their movements," he said, shortly. "As for winning, I don't see what connection there can be between the Franklands and any victory of mine. You don't suppose Miss Matilda believes in me, do you?" said Colin, with an uneasy laugh; "for that would be a mistake," he continued, a moment after. "She believes in her cousin."

"Maybe," said Lauderdale, in his oracular way, "it's an uncanny kind of relationship upon the whole; but I would not be the one to answer for it, especially if it's him she's expected to believe in. But there were no Miss Matildas in my mind," he added, with a smile. "I'll no ask what she had to do in yours, for you're but a callant, as I have to remind you twenty times in a day. But such lodgers are no to be encouraged," said Colin's adviser, with seriousness; "when they get into a young head it's hard to get them out again; and the worst of them is, that they take more room than their fair share. Have you got your essay well in hand for the principal? That's more to the purpose than Miss Matilda; and now the end of the session's drawing near, and I'm a thought anxious about the philosophy class. Yon Highland colt with the red hair will run you close, if you don't take heed. It's no prizes I'm thinking upon," said Lauderdale; "it's the whole plan of the campaign. I'll come up and talk it all over again, if you want advice; but I've great confidence in your own genius." As he said this, he laid his hand upon the lad's shoulder, and looked down into his eyes. "Summer's the time to dream," said the tall student, with a smile and a sigh. Perhaps he had given undue importance to the name of Miss Matilda. He looked into the fresh young face with that mixture of affection and pathos—ambition for the lad, mingled with a generous, tender envy of him—which all along had moved the elder man in his intercourse with Colin. The look for once penetrated through the mists of custom and touched the boy's heart.

"You are very good to me, Lauderdale," he said, with a little effusion; at the sound of which words his friend grasped his shoulder affectionately and went off, without saying anything more, into the dingy Glasgow streets. Colin himself paused a minute to watch the tall, retreating figure before he climbed his own tedious stair. "Summer's the time to dream," he repeated to himself, with a certain brightness in his face, and went up the darkling staircase three steps at a time, stimulated most probably by some thoughts more exciting than anything connected with college prizes or essays. It was the end of March, and already now and then a chance breeze whispered to Colin that the primroses had begun to peep out about the roots of the trees in all the soft glens of the Holy Loch. It had only been in the previous spring that primroses became anything more to Colin than they were to Peter Bell; but now the youth's eyes were anointed, he had begun to write poetry, and to taste the delights of life. Though he had already learned to turn his verses with the conscious deception of a Moore, it did not occur to Colin as possible that the life which was so sweet one year might not be equally delightful the next, or that anything could occur to deprive him of the companionship he was looking forward to. He had never received any shock yet in his youthful certainty of pleasure, and did not stop to think that the chance which brought Sir Thomas Frankland's nursery, and with it his pretty miss, to the Castle, for all the long spring and summer, might never recur again. So he went up-stairs three steps at a time, in the dingy twilight, and sat down to his essay, raising now and then triumphant, youthful eyes, which surveyed the mean walls and poor little room without seeing anything of the poverty, and making all his young, arrogant, absolute philosophy sweet with thoughts of the primroses, and the awaking waters, and the other human creature, the child Eve of the boy's Paradise. This was how Colin managed to compose the essay, which drew tears of mingled laughter

and emotion from Lauderdale's eyes, and dazzled the professor himself with its promise of eloquence, and secured the prize in the philosophy class. The Highland colt with the red hair, who was Colin's rival, was very much sounder in his views, and had twenty times more logic in his composition; but the professor was dazzled, and the class itself could scarcely forbear its applause. Colin went home accordingly covered with glory. He was nearly nineteen; he was one of the most promising students of the year; he had already distinguished himself sufficiently to attract the attention of people interested in college successes; and he had all the long summer before him, and no one could tell how many rambles about the glens, how many voyages across the loch, how many researches into the wonders of the hills. He bade farewell to Lauderdale with a momentary seriousness, but forgot before the smoke of Glasgow was out of sight that he had ever parted from anybody, or that all his friends were not awaiting him in this summer of delight.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Come away into the fire; it's bonnie weather, but it's sharp on the hillside," said the mistress of Ramore. "I never wearied for you, Colin, so much as I've done this year. No that there was ony particular occasion, for we've a' been real weel, and a good season, and baith bairns and beasts keeping their health; but the heart's awfu' capricious, and canna hear reason. Come in bye to the fire."

"There's been three days of east wind," said the farmer, who had gone across the loch to meet his son, and bring him home in triumph, "which accounts for your mother's anxiety, Colin. When there's plenty of blue sky, and the sun shining, there's naething she hasna courage for. What's doing in Glasgow? or rather what's doing at the college? or, maybe, if you insist upon it, what are *you* doing? for that's the most important to us."

To which Colin, who was almost as shy of talking of his own achievements as of old, gave for answer some bald account of the winding up of the session and of his own honors. "I told you all about it in my last letter," he said, hurrying over the narrative; 'there was nothing out of the common. Tell me rather all the news of the parish—who is at home and who is away, and if any of the visitors have come yet?" said the lad, with a conscious tremor in his voice. Most likely his mother understood what he meant.

"It's ower early for visitors yet," she said, "though I think for my part there's nothing like the spring, with the days lengthening, and the light aye eking and eking itself out. To be sure, there's the east winds, which is a sore drawback, but it has nae great effect on the west coast. The castle woods are wonderful bonnie, Colin: near as bonnie as they were last year, when a' those bright English bairnies made the place look cheerful. I wonder the earl bides there so seldom himself. He's no rich, to be sure, but it's a moderate kind of a place. If I had enough money I would rather live there than in the queen's parlor, and so the minister says. You'll have to go down to the manse the morn, and tell them a' about your prizes, Colin," said his proud mother, looking at him with beaming eyes. She put her head upon her boy's shoulder, and patted him softly as he stood beside her. "He takes a great interest in what you're doing at the college," she continued; "he says you're a credit to the parish, and so I hope you'll aye be," said Mrs. Campbell. She had not any doubt on the subject so far as her own convictions went.

"He does not know me," said the impatient Colin; "but I'll go to the manse tomorrow if you like. It's half-way to the castle," he said, under his breath, and then felt himself color, much to his annoyance, under his mother's eyes.

"There's plenty folk to visit," said the farmer. "As for the castle, it's out of our way, no to say it looked awfu' doleful the last time I was by. The pastor would get it but for the name of the thing. We've had a wonderful year, take it a' thegither, and the weather is promising for this season. If you're no over-grand with all your honors, I would be glad of your advice, as soon as you've rested, about the Easter fields. I'm thinking of some changes, and there's nae time to lose."

"If you would but let the laddie take breath!" said the farmer's wife. "New out of all his toils and his troubles, and you canna refrain from the Easter fields. It's my belief," said the mistress, with a little solemnity, "that prosperity is awfu' trying to

the soul. I dinna think you ever cared for siller, Colin, till now; but instead of rejoicing in your heart over the Almighty's blessing, I hear nothing, from morning to night, but about mair profit. It's no what I've been used to," said Colin's mother, "and there's mony a thing mair important that I want to hear about. Eh! Colin, it's my hope you'll no get to be over-fond of this world!"

"If this world meant no more than a fifty pound or so in the bank," said big Colin, with a smile; "but there's no denying it's a wonderful comfort to have a bit margin, and no be aye from hand to mouth. As soon as your mother's satisfied with looking at you, you can come out to me, Colin, and have a look at the beasts. It's a pleasure to see them. Apart from profit, Jeanie," said the farmer, with his humorous look, "if you object to that, it's grand to see such an improvement in a breed of living creatures that you and me spend so much of our time among. Next to bonnie bairns, bonnie cattle's a reasonable pride for a farmer, no to say but that making siller in any honest way is as laudable an occupation as I ken of for a man with a family like me."

"If it doesna take up your heart," said the mistress. "But it's awfu' to hear folk how they crave siller for siller's sake; especially in a place like this, where there's aye strangers coming and going, and a' body's aye trying how much is to be got for everything. I promised the laddies a holiday the morn to hear a' Colin's news, and you're no to take him off to byres and ploughed land the very first day, though I dinna say but I would like him to see Gowan's calf," said the farmer's wife, yielding a little in her superior virtue. As for Colin, he sat very impatiently through this conversation, vainly attempting to bring in the question which he longed, yet did not like, to ask.

"I suppose the visitors will come early, as the weather is so fine?" he ventured to say as soon as there was a pause.

"Oh, ay, the Glasgow folks," said Mrs. Campbell; and she gave a curious, inquiring glance at her son, who was looking out of the window with every appearance of abstraction. "Do you know anybody that's coming, Colin?" said the anxious mother; "some of your new friends?" And Colin was so sensible of her look, though his eyes were turned in exactly the opposite direction, that his face grew crimson up to the great waves of brown hair which were always tumbling about his forehead. He thrust his heavy lovelocks off his temples with an impatient hand, and got up and went to the window that his confusion might not be visible. Big Colin of Ramore was at the window too, darkening the apartment with his great bulk, and the farmer laid his hand on his son's shoulder with a homely roughness, partly assumed to conceal his real feeling.

"How tall are you, laddie? no much short of me now," he said. "Look here, Jeanie, at your son." The mistress put down her work, and came up to them, defeating all Colin's attempts to escape her look; but in the mean time she, too, forgot the blushes of her boy in the pleasant sight before her. She was but a little woman herself, considered in the countryside rather too soft and delicate for a farmer's wife; and with all the delicious confidence of love and weakness, the tender woman looked up at her husband and her son.

"Young Mr. Frankland's No half so tall as Colin," said the proud mother; "no that height is anything to brag about unless a' things else is conformable. He's weel enough, and a strong-built callant, but there's a great difference, though, to be sure; his mother is just as proud," said the mistress, bearing her conscious superiority with meekness; "it's a grand thing that we're a' best pleased with our ain."

"When did you see young Frankland?" said Colin, hastily. The two boys had scarcely met since the encounter which had made a link between the families without awaking very friendly sentiments in the bosoms of the two persons principally concerned.

"That's a thing to be discussed hereafter," said the farmer of Ramore. "I didna mean to say onything about it till I saw what your inclinations were; but women-folk are aye hasty. Sir Thomas has made me a proposition, Colin. He would like to send you to Oxford with his own son if you and me were to consent. We're to gie him an answer when we've made up our minds. Nae doubt he has heard that you were like enough to be a creditable protejee," said big Colin, with natural complacency. "A lad of genius gies distinction to his patron, if ye can put up with a patron, Colin."

"Can *you*?" cried his son. The lad was greatly agitated by the question. Ambitious Scotch youths of Colin's type, in the state of discontent which was common to the race, had come to look upon the English universities as the goal of all possible hopes. Not that Colin would have confessed as much had his fate depended on it, but such was the fact notwithstanding. Oxford, to his mind, meant any or every possibility under heaven, without any limit to the splendor of the hopes involved. A different kind of flush, the glow of eagerness and ambition, came to his face. But joined with this came a tumult of vague but burning offence and contradiction. While he recognized the glorious chance thus opened to him, pride started up to bolt and bar those gates of hope. He turned upon his father with something like anger in his voice, with a tantalizing sense of all the advantages thus flourished wantonly, as he thought, before his eyes. "Could *you* put up with a patron?" he repeated, looking almost fiercely in the farmer's face; "and if not, why do you ask me such a question?" Colin felt injured by the suggestion. To be offered the thing of all others he most desired in the world by means which made it impossible to accept the offer would have been galling enough under any circumstances; but just now, at this crisis of his youthful ambition and excitement, such a tantalizing glimpse of the possible and the impossible was beyond bearing. "Are we his dependants that he makes such an offer to me?" said the exasperated youth; and big Colin himself looked on with a little surprise at his son's excitement, comprehending only partially what it meant.

"I'll no say I'm fond of patronage," said the farmer, slowly; "neither in the kirk nor out of the kirk. It's my opinion a man does aye best that fights his own way; but there's aye exceptions, Colin. I wouldna have you make up your mind in any arbitrary way. As for Sir Thomas, he has aye been real civil and friendly—no one of your condescending fine gentlemen—and the son—"

"What right have I to any favor from Sir Thomas?" said the impatient Colin. "He is nothing to me. I did no more for young Frankland than I would have done for any dog on the hillside," he continued, with a contemptuous tone; and then his conscience reproved him. "I don't mean to say anything against *him*. He behaved like a man, and saved himself," said Colin, with haughty candor. "As for all this pretence of rewarding me, it feels like an insult. I want nothing at their hands."

"There's no occasion to be violent," said the farmer. "I dinna expect that he'll use force to make you accept his offer, which is weel meant and kind, whatever else it may be. I canna say I understand a' this fury on your part; and there's no good that I can see in deciding this very moment and no other. I would like you to sleep upon it and turn it over in your mind. Such an offer doesna come every day to the Holy Loch. I'm no the man to seek help," said big Colin, "but there's times when it's more generous to receive than to give."

The mistress had followed her son wistfully with her eyes through all his changes of countenance and gesture. She was not simply surprised like her husband, but looked at him with unconscious insight, discovering by intuition what was in his breast—something, at least, of what was in his heart—for the anxious mother was mistaken, and rushed at conclusions which Colin himself was far from having reached.

"There's plenty of time to decide," said the farmer's wife; "and I've that confidence in my laddie that I ken he'll do nothing from a poor motive, nor out of a jealous heart. There never were ony sulky ways, that ever I saw, in ony bairn of mine," said Mrs. Campbell; "and if there was one in the world that was mair fortunate than me, I wouldna show a poor spirit towards him, because he had won, whiles it's mair generous to receive than to give, as the maister says; and whiles it's mair noble to lose than to win," said the mistress, with a momentary faltering of emotion in her voice. She thought the bitterness of hopeless love was in her boy's heart, and that he was tempted to turn fiercely from the friendship of his successful rival. And she lifted her soft eyes, which were beaming with all the magnanimous impulses of nature, to Colin's face, who did not comprehend the tenderness of pity with which his mother regarded him. But, at least, he perceived that something much higher and profounder than anything he was thinking of was in the mistress's thoughts; and he turned away somewhat abashed from her anxious look.

"I am not jealous that I am aware of," said Colin; "but I have never done anything

to deserve this, and I should prefer not to accept any favors from—any man," he concluded, abruptly. That was how they left the discussion for that time at least. When the farmer went out to look after his necessary business, his wife remained with Colin, looking at him often, as she glanced up from her knitting, with eyes of wistful wonder. Had she been right in her guess, or was it merely a vague sentiment of repulsion which kept him apart from young Frankland? But all the mother's anxiety could not break through the veil which separates one mysterious individuality from another. She read his looks with eager attention, half right and half wrong, as people make out an unfamiliar language. He had drifted off somehow from the plain vernacular of his boyish thoughts, and she had not the key to the new complications. So it was with a mixed and doubtful joy that the mistress of Ramore, on the first night of his return, regarded her son.

"And I suppose," said Colin, with a smile dancing about his lips, "that I am to answer this proposal when they come to the castle? And they are coming soon as they expected last year? or perhaps they are there now?" he said, getting up from his chair again and walking away towards the door that his mother might not see the gleams of expectation in his face.

"But, Colin, my man," said the mistress, who did not perceive the blow she was about to administer, "they're no coming to the castle this year. The young lady that was delicate has got well, and they're a' in London and in an awfu' whirl o' gayety like the rest of their kind; and Lady Mary, the earl's sister, is to have the castle with her bairns; and that's the way Sir Thomas wants our answer in a letter, for there's none of the family to be here this year."

It did not strike the mistress as strange that Colin made no answer. He was standing at the door looking out, and she could not see his face. And when he went out of doors presently, she was not surprised; it was natural he should want to see everything about the familiar place; and she called after him to say that, if he would wait a moment, she would go herself and show him Gowan's calf. But he either did not hear her, or, at least, did not wait the necessary moment; and when she had glanced out in her turn, and had perceived with delight that the wind had changed, and that the sun was going down in glorious crimson and gold behind the hills, the mistress returned with a relieved heart to prepare the family tea. "It'll be a fine day to-morrow," she said to herself, rejoicing over it for Colin's sake; and so went in to her domestic duties with a lightened heart.

At that moment Colin had just pushed forth into the loch, flinging himself into the boat anyhow, disgusted with the world and himself and everything that surrounded him. In a moment, in the drawing of a breath, an utter blank and darkness had replaced all the lovely summer landscape that was glowing by anticipation in his heart. In the sudden pang of disappointment, the lad's first impulse was to fling himself forth into the solitude, and escape the voices and looks which were hateful to him at that moment. Nor was it simple disappointment that moved him; his feelings were complicated by many additional shades of aggravation. It had seemed so natural that everything should happen this year as last year, and now it seemed such blind folly to imagine that it could have been possible. Not only were his dreams all frustrated and turned to nothing, but he fell ever so many degrees in his own esteem and felt so foolish and vain and unkind, as he turned upon himself with the acute mortification and sudden disgust of youth. What an idiot he had been! To think she would again leave all the brilliant world for the loch and the primroses, and those other childish delights on which he had been dwelling like a fool!

Very bitter were Colin's thoughts, as he dashed out into the middle of the loch, and there laid up his oars and abandoned himself to the buffetings of excited fancy. What right had he to imagine that she had ever thought of him again, or to hope that such a thread of gold could be woven into his rustic and homely web of fate? He scoffed at himself, as he remembered, with acute pangs of self-contempt, the joyous, rose-colored dreams that had occupied him only a few hours ago. What a fool he was to entertain such vain, complacent fancies! He, a farmer's son, whose highest hope must be, after countless aggravations and exasperations, to get "placed" in a country church in some rural corner of Scotland. And then Colin recalled Sir Thomas Frankland's proposal, and took

to his oars again in a kind of fury, feeling it impossible to keep still. The baronet's kind offer looked like an intentional insult to the excited lad. He thought to himself that they wanted to reward him somehow by rude, tangible means, as if he were a servant, for what Colin proudly and indignantly declared to himself was no service—certainly no intentional service. On the whole, he had never been so wretched, so downcast, so fierce and angry and miserable in all his life. If he could but, by any means, by any toil, or self-denial, or sacrifice, get to Oxford, on his own account, and show the rich man and his son how little the Campbells of Ramore stood in need of patronage! All the glory had faded off the hills before Colin bethought himself of the necessity of returning to the homely house which he had greeted with so much natural pleasure a few hours before. His mother was standing at the door looking out for him as he drew towards the beach, looking at him with eyes full of startled and anxious half-comprehension. She knew he was disturbed somehow, and made guesses, right in the main, but all wrong in the particulars, which were, though he tried hard to repress all signs of it, another exasperation to Colin. This was how the first evening of his return closed upon the student of Ramore. He could not take any pleasure just then in the fact of being at home, nor in the homely love and respect and admiration that surrounded him. Like all the rest of the world, he neglected the true gold lying close at hand for the longing he had after the false diamonds that glittered at a distance. It was hard work for him to preserve an ordinary appearance of affection and interest in all that was going on, as he sat, absent and pre-occupied, at his father's table. "Colin's no like you idle laddies; he has ower much to think of to laugh and make a noise, like you," the mistress said with dignity, as she consoled the younger brothers, who were disappointed in Colin. And she half believed what she said, though she spoke with the base intention of deluding "the laddies," who knew no better. The house, on the whole, was rather disturbed than brightened by the return of the first-born, who had thus become a foreign element in the household life. Such was the inauspicious beginning of the holidays, which had been to Colin, for months back, the subject of so many dreams.

CHAPTER IX.

It was some time before Colin recovered his composure, or found it possible to console himself for the failure of his hopes. He wrote a great deal of poetry in the mean time —or rather of verses which looked wonderfully like poetry, such as young men of genius are apt to produce under such circumstances. The chances are, that if he had confided them to any critic of a sympathetic mind, attempts would have been made to persuade Colin that he was a poet. But luckily Lauderdale was not at hand, and there was no one else to whom the shy young dreamer would have disclosed himself. He sent some of his musings to the magazines, and so added a little excitement and anxiety to his life. But nobody knew Colin in that little world where, as in other worlds, most things go by favor, and impartial appreciation is comparatively unknown. The editors most probably would have treated their unknown correspondent in exactly the same manner had he been a young Tennyson. As it was, Colin did not quite know what to think about his repeated failures in this respect. When he was despondent he became disgusted with his own productions, and said to himself that of course such maudlin verse could be procured by the bushel, and was not worthy of paper and print. But in other moods the lad imagined he must have some enemy who prejudiced the editorial world, and shut against him the gates of literary fame. In books all the heroes, who could do nothing else, found so ready a subsistence by means of magazines, that the poor boy was naturally puzzled to find that all his efforts could not gain him a hearing. And it began to be rather important to him to find something to do. During the previous summers Colin had not disdained the farm and its labors, but had worked with his father and brothers without any sense of incongruity. But now matters were changed. Miss Matilda, with her curls and her smiles, had bewitched the boy out of his simple innocent life. It did not seem natural that the hand which she consented to touch with her delicate fingers should hold the plough or the reaping-hook, or that her companion in so many celestial rambles should plod through the furrows at other times, or go into the rough drolleries of the harvest field. Colin began to think that the life of a farmer's son at Ramore was inconsistent with his future

hopes, and there was nothing else for it but teaching, since so little was to be made of the magazines. When he had come to himself and began to see the surrounding circumstances with clearer eyes, Colin, who had no mind to be dependent, but meant to make his own way as was natural to a Scotch lad of his class, bethought himself of the most natural expedient. He had distinguished himself at college, and it was not difficult to find the occupation he wanted. Perhaps he was glad to escape from the primitive home, from the mother's penetrating looks, and all the homely ways of which the ambitious boy began to be a little impatient. He had come to the age of discontent. He had begun to look forward no longer to the vague splendors of boyish imagination, but to elevation in the social scale, and what he heard people call success in life. A year or two before it had not occurred to Colin to consider the circumstances of his own lot—his ambition pointed only to ideal grandeur, unembarrassed by particulars—and it was very possible for the boy to be happy, thinking of some incoherent greatness to come, while engaged in the humblest work, and living in the homeliest fashion. But the time had arrived when the pure ideal had to take to itself some human garments, and when the farmer's son became aware that a scholar and a gentleman required a greater degree of external refinement in his surroundings. His young heart was wounded by this new sense, and his visionary pride offended by the thought that these external matters could count for anything in the dignity of a man. But Colin had to yield like every other. He loved his family no less, but he was less at home among them. The inevitable disruption was commencing, and already, with the quick insight of her susceptible nature, the mistress of Ramore had discovered that the new current was setting in, that the individual stream of Colin's life was about to disengage itself, and that her proud hopes for her boy were to be sealed by his separation from her. The tender-hearted woman said nothing of it, except by an occasional pathetic reflection upon things in general, which went to Colin's heart, and which he understood perfectly; but perhaps, though no one would have confessed as much, it was a relief to all when the scholar-son, of whom everybody at Ramore was so proud, went off across the loch, rowed by two of his brothers, with his portmanteau and the first evening coat he had ever possessed, to Ardmartin, the fine house on the opposite bank, where he was to be tutor to Mr. Jordan's boys, and eat among strangers the bread of his own toil.

The mistress stood at her door shading her eyes with her hand, and looking after the boat as it shot across the bright water. Never at its height of beauty had the Holy Loch looked more fair. The sun was expanding and exulting over all the hills, searching into every hollow, throwing up unthought-of tints, heaps of moss, and masses of rock, that no one knew of till that moment; and with the sunshine went flying shadows that rose and fell like the lifting of an eyelid. The gleam of the sun before she put up her hand to shade her face fell upon the tear in the mistress's eye, and hung a rainbow upon the long lash, which was wet with that tender dew. She looked at her boys gliding over the loch through this veil of fairy colors, all made out of a tear, and the heart in her tender bosom beat with a corresponding conjunction of pain and happiness. "He'll never more come back to bide at home like his father's son," she said to herself, softly, with a pang of natural mortification; "but, eh, I'm a thankless woman to complain, and him so weel and so good, and naething in faut but nature," added the mother, with all the compunction of true love; and so stood gazing till the boat had gone out of hearing, and was just touching upon that sweet shadow of the opposite bank, projected far into the loch, which plunged the whole landscape into a dazzling uncertainty, and made it a doubtful matter which was land and which was water. Colin himself, touched by the loveliness of the scene, had paused just then to look down the shining line to where this beatified paradise of water opened out into the heaven of Clyde. And to his mother's eyes gazing after him, the boat seemed to hang suspended among the sweet spring foliage of the Lady's Glen, which lay reflected, every leaf and twig, in the sweeter loch. When somebody called her indoors she went away with a sigh. Was it earth, or a vision of paradise, or "some unsubstantial fairy place"? The sense of all this loveliness struck intense, with almost a feeling of pain, upon the gentle woman's poetic heart.

And it was in such a scene that Colin wrote the verses which borrowed from the sun and the rain prismatic colors like those of his mother's tears, and were as near poetry as they could possibly be to miss that glory. Luckily for him, he had no favorite confidant now to persuade him that he was a poet, so the verse-making did him nothing but good, providing a safety-valve for that somewhat stormy period of his existence.

Mr. Jordan was very rich and very liberal, and, indeed, lavish of the money which had elevated him above all his early friends and associations. He had travelled; he bought pictures; he prided himself upon his library; and he was very good to his young tutor, who, he told everybody, was "a lad of genius;" but naturally, with all this, Colin's existence was not one of unmingled bliss. As soon as he had left Ramore he began to look back to it with longing, as was natural to his years. The sense that he had that home behind him, with everybody ready to stand by him whatever trouble he might fall into, and every heart open to hear and sympathize in all the particulars of his life, restored the young man all at once to content and satisfaction with the homely household that loved him. When he was there life looked gray and sombre in all its sober-colored garments; but when he looked across the loch at the white house on the hillside, that little habitation had regained its ideal character. He had some things to endure, as was natural, that galled his high spirit, but, on the whole, he was happier than if he had still been at Ramore.

And so the summer passed on. He had sent his answer to Sir Thomas without any delay,—an answer in which, on the whole, his father concurred,—written in a strain of lofty politeness which would not have misbecome a young prince. "He was destined for the Church of Scotland," Colin wrote, "and such being the case, it was best that he should content himself with the training of a Scotch university." "Less perfect, no doubt," the boy had said, with a kind of haughty humility; "but, perhaps, better adapted to the future occupations of a Scotch clergyman." And then he went on to offer thanks in a magnificent way, calculated to overwhelm utterly the good-natured baronet, who had never once imagined that the pride of the farmer's son would be wounded by his proposal. The answer had been sent, and no notice had been taken of it. It was months since then, and not a word of Sir Thomas Frankland or his family had been heard about the Holy Loch. They seemed to have disappeared altogether back again into their native firmament, never more to dazzle the eyes of beholders in the west country. It was hard upon Colin thus to lose, at a stroke, not only the hope on which he had built so securely, but at the same time a great part of the general stimulation of his life. Not only the visionary budding love which had filled him with so many sweet thoughts, but even the secret rivalry and opposition which no one knew of, had given strength and animation to his life, and both seemed to have departed together. He mused over it often with wonder, asking himself if Lauderdale was right; if it was true that most things come to nothing; and whether meetings and partings, which looked as if they must tell upon life for ever and ever, were, after all, of not half so much account as the steady routine of existence? The youth perplexed himself daily with such questions, and wrote to Lauderdale many a long, mysterious epistle which puzzled still more his anxious friend, who could not make out what had set Colin's brains astray out of all the confident philosophies of his years. When the young man, in his hours of leisure, climbed up the woody ravine close by, to where the burn took long leaps over the rocks, flinging itself down in diamonds and showers of spray into the heart of the deep summer foliage in the Lady's Glen, and from that height looked down upon the castle on the other side, seated among its leaves and trees on the soft promontory which narrowed the entrance of the loch, Colin could not but feel this unexpected void which was suddenly made in his life. The Frankland family had been prominent objects on his horizon for a number of years. In disliking or liking, they had been always before him; and even at his most belligerent period, there was something not disagreeable to the lad's fancy, at least, in this link of connection with a world so different from his own — a world in which, however commonplace might be the majority of the actors, such great persons as were to be had in the age might still be found. And now they had gone altogether away out of Colin's reach or ken; and he was left in his natural

position nowise affected by his connection with them. It was a strange feeling, and, notwithstanding the scorn with which he rejected the baronet's kindness and declined his patronage, much disappointment and mortification mingled with the sense of surprise in Colin's mind. "It was all as it ought to be," he said to himself many times as he pondered over it; but, perhaps, if it had been quite as he expected, he would not have needed to impress that sentiment on his mind by so many repetitions. These reflections still recurred to him all the summer through whenever he had any time to himself. But Colin's time was not much at his own disposal.

Nature had given to the country lad a countenance which propitiated the world. Not that it was handsome in the abstract, or could bear examination feature by feature, but there were few people who could resist the mingled shyness and frankness of the eyes with which Colin looked out upon the miraculous universe, perceiving perpetual wonders. The surprise of existence was still in his face, indignant though he would have been had anybody told him so; and tired people of the world, who knew better than they practised, took comfort in talking to the youth, who, whatever he might choose to say, was still looking as might be seen, with fresh eyes at the dewy earth, and saw everything through the atmosphere of the morning. This unconscious charm of his told greatly upon women, and most of all upon women who were older than himself. The young ladies were not so sure of him, for his fancy was pre-occupied; but he gained many friends among the matrons whom he encountered, and such friendships are apt to make large inroads upon a young man's time. And their hospitality reigns paramount on those sweet shores of the Holy Loch. Mr. Jordan filled his handsome house with a continual succession of guests from all quarters; and as neither the host nor hostess was in the least degree amusing, Colin's services were in constant requisition. Sometimes the company was good, often indifferent; but at all events, it occupied the youth, and kept him from too much inquisition into the early troubles of his own career.

His life went on in this fashion until September brought sportsmen in flocks to the heathery braes of the loch. Colin, whose engagement was but a temporary one, was beginning to look forward once again to his old life in Glasgow—to the close little room in Donaldson's Land, and the long walks and longer talks with Lauderdale, which were almost his only recreation. Perhaps the idea was not so agreeable to him as in former years. Somehow, he was going back with a duller prospect of existence, with his radiance of variable light upon his horizon; and in the absence of this fairy illumination the natural circumstances became more palpable, and struck him with a sense of their poverty and meanness such as he had never felt before. He had to gulp down a little disgust as he thought of his attic, and even, in the involuntary fickleness of his years, was not quite so sure of enjoying Lauderdale's philosophy as he had once been.

He was in this state of mind when he heard of a new party of visitors who were to arrive the day after at Ardmartin—a distinguished party of visitors, fine people, whom Mr. Jordan had met somewhere in the world, and who had deigned to forget his lack of rank, and even of interest, in his wealth and his grouse and the convenient situation of his house; for Colin's employer was not moderately rich,—a condition which does a man no good in society,—but had heaps upon heaps of money, or was supposed to have such, which comes to about the same, and was respected accordingly. Colin listened but languidly to the scraps of talk he heard about these fine people. There was a dowager countess among them whose name abstracted the lady of the house from all her important considerations. As for Colin, he was still too young to care for dowagers; he heard without hearing of all the preparations that were to be made, and the exertions that were thought necessary in order to make Ardmartin agreeable to so illustrious a party, and paid very little attention to anything that was going on, hoping within himself to make his escape from the fuss of the reception, and have a little time to himself. On the afternoon on which they were expected he betook himself to the hills, as soon as his work with his pupils was over. It had been raining as usual, and everything shone and glistened in the sun, which blazed all over the braes with a brightness which did not neutralize the chill of the wind. The air was so still that Colin heard the crack of the sportsman's gun from different points around him, miles apart

from each other, and could, even on the height where he stood, discriminate the throb of the little steamer which was progressing through the loch at his feet, reflecting to the minutest touch, from its pennon of white steam at the funnel to the patches of color among its passengers on the deck, in the clear water on which it glided. The young man pursued his walk till the shadows began to gather, and the big bell of Ardmartin pealed out its summons to dress into all the echoes as he reached the gate. The house looked crowded to the very door, where it had overflowed in a margin of servants, some of whom were still importing the last carriage as Colin entered. He pursued his way to his own room languidly enough, for he was tired, and he was not interested either. As he went up the grand staircase, however, he passed a door which was ajar, and from which came the sound of an animated conversation. Colin started as if he had received a blow, as one of these voices fell on his ear. He came to a dead pause in the gallery upon which this room opened, and stood listening, unconscious of the surprised looks of somebody's maid, who passed him with her lady's dress in her arms, and looked very curiously at the tutor. Colin stopped short and listened, suddenly roused up into a degree of interest which brought the color to his cheek and the light to his eye. He thought all the ladies of the party must be there, so varied was the pleasant din and so many the voices; but he had been standing breathless, in the most eager pose of listening, for nearly half the time allowed for dressing, before he heard again the voice which had arrested him. Then, when he began to imagine that it must have been a dream, the sound struck his ear once more—a few brief syllables, a sweet, sudden laugh, and again silence. Was it *her* voice, or was it only a mock of fancy? While he stood lingering, wondering, straining his ear for a repetition of the sound, the door opened softly, and various white figures in dressing-gowns flitted off up-stairs and down-stairs, some of them uttering little exclamations of fright at sight of the alarming apparition of a man. It was pretty to see them dispersing, like so many white doves, from that momentary confabulation; but *she* was not among them. Colin went up to his room and dressed with lightning speed, chafing within himself at the humble place which he was expected to take at the table. When he went into the dining-room, as usual, all the rest of the party were taking their places. The only womankind distinctly within Colin's sight was one of fifty, large enough to make six Matildas. He could not see *her*, though he strained his eyes up and down through the long alley of fruits and flowers. Though he was not twenty, and had walked about ten miles that afternoon over the wholesome heather, the poor young fellow could not eat any dinner. He had been placed beside a hoary old man to amuse him, whom his employer thought might be useful to the young student; but Colin had not half a dozen words to spend upon any one. Was *she* here, or was it mere imagination which brought down to him now and then, through the pauses of the conversation, a momentary tone that was like hers? When the ladies left the room the young man rushed, though it was not his office, to open the door for them. Another moment and Colin was in paradise—the paradise of fools. How was it possible that he could have been deceived? The little start with which she recognized him, the moment of surprise which made her drop her handkerchief and brought the color to her cheek, rapt the lad into a feeling more exquisite than any he had known all his life. She smiled; she gave him a rapid, sweet look of recognition, which was made complete by that start of surprise. Matilda was here, under the same roof—she whom he had never hoped to see again. Colin fell headlong into the unintended swoon. He sat pondering over her look and her startled movements all the tedious time, while the other men drank their wine, without being at all aware what divine elixir was in *his* cup. Her look of sweet wonder kept shining ever brighter and brighter before his imagination. Was it wonder only, or some dawning of another sentiment? If she had spoken, the spell might have been less powerful. A crowd of fairy voices kept whispering all manner of delicious follies in Colin's ear, as he sat waiting for the moment when he could follow her. Imagination did everything for him in that moment of expectation and unlooked-for delight.

PART IV.—CHAPTER X.

Mr. Jordan had invited a large party of people to meet the Dowager Countess; but the greatness of the leading light, which was to illustrate his house, had blinded him to the companion stars that were to tremble in her company. The principal people about had consented graciously to be reviewed by her ladyship, who, once upon a time, had been a very great lady and fashionable potentate. A very little fashion counts for much on the shores of the Holy Loch, and the population was moved accordingly. But the young ladies who accompanied the dowager were less carefully provided for. When Miss Frankland, who was unquestionably the beauty of the party, cast a glance of careless but acute observation round her, after all the gentlemen had returned to the drawing-room, she saw nobody whom she cared to distinguish by her notice. Most of the men about had a flavor of conventionality in their talk or their manner or their whiskers. Most of them were rich, some of them were very well bred and well educated, though the saucy beauty could not perceive it; but there was not an individual among them who moved her curiosity or her interest, except one who stood rather in the background, and whose eyes kept seeking her with wistful devotion. Colin had improved during the last year. He was younger than Miss Frankland, a fact of which she was aware, and he was at the age upon which a year tells mightily. Looking at him in the background, through clouds of complacent people who felt themselves Colin's superiors, even an indifferent spectator might have distinguished the tall youth, with those heaps of brown hair overshadowing the forehead which might have been apostrophized as "domed for thought" if anybody could have seen it: and in his eyes that gleam of things miraculous, that unconscious surprise and admiration, which would have given a touch of poetry to the most commonplace countenance. But Miss Matilda was not an indifferent spectator. She was fond of him in her way as women are fond of a man whom they never mean to love—fond of him as one is fond of the victim who consents to glorify one's triumph. As she looked at him and saw how he had improved, and perceived the faithful allegiance with which he watched every movement she made, the heart of the beauty was touched. Worship is sweet, even when it is only a country boy who bestows it—and perhaps this country boy might turn out a genius or a poet—not that Matilda cared much for genius or poetry; but she liked everything that bestows distinction, and was aware that in the lack of other titles, a little notability, even in society, might be obtained, if one was brave and knew how to manage it, by these means. And besides all this, honestly, and at the foundation, she was fond of Colin. When she had surveyed all the company, and had made up her mind that there was nobody there in the least degree interesting, she held up her fan with a pretty gesture, calling him to her. The lad made his way through the assembly at that call with a smile and glow of exultation which it is impossible to describe. His face was lighted up with a kind of celestial intoxication. "Who is that very handsome young man?" the Dowager Countess was moved to remark as he passed within her ladyship's range of vision, which was limited, for Lady Hallamshire was, like most other people, short-sighted. "Oh, he is not a handsome young man; he is only the tutor," said one of the ladies of the Holy Loch; but, notwithstanding, she, too, looked after Colin, with aroused curiosity. "I suppose Matty Frankland must have met him in society," said the dowager, who was the most comfortable of *chaperones*, and went on with her talk, turning her eyeglass round and towards her pretty charge. As for the young men, they stared at Colin with mingled consternation and wrath. What was he? a fellow who had not a penny, a mere Scotch student, to be distinguished by the prettiest girl in the room? for the aspiring people about the Holy Loch, as well as in the other parts of Scotland, had come to entertain that contempt for the national universities and national scholarships which is so curious a feature in the present transition state of the country. If Colin had been an Oxford man, the west-country people would have thought it quite natural; but a Scotch student did not impress them with any particular respect.

"I'm so glad to meet you again!" said Matty, with the warmest cordiality, "but so surprised to see you here. What are you doing here? why have you come away from that delicious Ramore, where I am sure I should live for ever and ever if it were mine? What have you been doing with yourself all this time? Come and tell me all about

it, and I do so want to know how everything is looking at that dear castle and in our favorite glen. Don't you remember that darling glen behind the church, where we used to gather basketfuls of primroses—and all the lovely moors? I am dying to hear about everything and everybody. Do come and sit down here, and tell me all."

"Where shall I begin?" said Colin, who, utterly forgetful of his position, and all the humilities incumbent on him in such an exalted company, had instantly taken possession of the seat she pointed out to him, and had placed himself according to her orders directly between her and the company, shutting her into a corner. Miss Matty could see very well all that was going on in the drawing-room, but Colin had his back to the company, and had forgotten everything in the world except her face.

"Oh, with yourself, of course," said Matty. "I want to know all about it; and, first of all, what are you doing among these sort of people?" the young lady continued, with a little more of her face toward the assembled multitude, some of whom were quite within hearing.

"These sort of people have very little to say to me," said Colin; who suddenly felt himself elevated over their heads; "I am only the tutor;" and the two foolish young creatures looked at each other, and laughed, as if Colin of Ramore had been a prince in disguise, and his tutorship an excellent joke.

"Oh, you are only the tutor?" said Miss Matty; "that is charming. Then one will be able to make all sorts of use of you. Everybody is allowed to maltreat a tutor. You will have to row us on the loch, and walk with us to the glen, and carry our cloaks, and generally conduct yourself as becomes a slave and vassal. As for me, I shall order you about with the greatest freedom, and expect perfect obedience," said the beauty, looking with her eyes full of laughter into Colin's face.

"All that goes without saying," said Colin, who did not like to commit himself to the French. "I almost think I have already proved my perfect allegiance."

"Oh, you were only a boy last year," said Miss Matty, with some evanescent change of color, which looked like a blush to Colin's delighted eyes. "Now you are a man and a tutor, and we shall behave to you accordingly. How lovely that glen was last spring, to be sure," continued the girl, with a little quite unconscious natural feeling; "do you remember the day when it rained, and we had to wait under the beeches, and when you imagined all sorts of things in the gathering of the shower? Do you write any poetry now? I want so much to see what you have been doing since," said the siren, who, half-touched by nature in her own person, was still perfectly conscious of her power.

"Since!" Colin repeated the word over to himself with a flush of happiness which, perhaps, no such good in existence could have equalled. Poor boy! if he could but have known what had happened "since" in Miss Matty's experience—but, fortunately, he had not the smallest idea what was involved in the season which the young lady had lately terminated, or in the brilliant winter campaign in the country, which had brought adorers in plenty, but nothing worthy of the beauty's acceptance, to Miss Matty's feet. Colin thought only of the beatific dreams, the faithful follies which had occupied his own juvenile imagination "since." As for the heroine herself, she looked slightly confused to hear him repeat the word. She had meant it to produce its effect, but then she was thinking solely of a male creature of her own species, and not of a primitive, innocent soul like that which looked at her in a glow of young delight out of Colin's eyes. She was used to be admired and complimented, and humored to the top of her bent, but she did not understand being believed in, and the new sensation somewhat fluttered and embarrassed the young woman of the world. She watched his look, as he replied to her, and thereby added double, though she did not mean it, to the effect of what she had said.

"I never write poetry," said Colin; "I wish I could—I know how I should use the gift; but I have a few verses about somewhere, I suppose, like anybody else. Last spring I was almost persuaded I could do something better; but that feeling lasts only so long as one's inspiration lasts," said the youth, looking down, in his turn, lest his meaning might be discovered too quickly in his eye.

And then there ensued a pause,—a pause which was more dangerous than the talk, and which Miss Matty made haste to break.

"Do you know you are very much changed?" she said. "You never did any

of this society-talk last year. You have been making friends with some ladies somewhere, and they have taught you conversation. But, as for me, I am your early friend, and I preferred you when you did not talk like other people," said Miss Matty, with a slight pout. "Tell me who has been forming your mind."

Perhaps it was fortunate for Colin at this moment that Lady Hallamshire had become much bored by the group which had gathered round her sofa. The dowager was clever in her way, and had written a novel or two, and was accustomed to be amused by the people who had the honor of talking to her. Though she was no longer a leader of fashion, she kept up the manners and customs of that remarkable species of the human race, and when she was bored, permitted her sentiments to be plainly visible in her expressive countenance. Though it was the member of the county who was enlightening her at the moment in the statistics of the West Highlands, and though she had been in a state of great anxiety five minutes before about the emigration which was depopulating the moors, her ladyship broke in quite abruptly in the midst of the poor-rates with a totally irrelevant observation:—

"It appears to me that Matty Frankland has got into another flirtation; I must go and look after her," said the dowager; and she smiled graciously upon the explanatory member, and left him talking, to the utter consternation of their hostess. Lady Hallamshire thought it probable that the young man was amusing as well as handsome, or Matty Frankland, who was a girl of discretion, would not have received him into such marked favor. "Though I dare say there is nobody here worth her trouble," her *chaperone* thought as she looked round the room; but anyhow a change was desirable. "Matty, mignonne, I want to know what you are talking about," she said, suddenly coming to anchor opposite the two young people; and a considerable fuss ensued to find her ladyship a seat, during which time Colin had a hundred minds to run away. The company took a new centre after this performance on the part of the great lady, and poor Colin, all at once, began to feel that he was doing exactly the reverse of what was expected of him. He got up with a painful blush as he met Mr. Jordan's astonished eye. The poor boy did not know that he had been much more remarked before: "flirting openly with that dreadful little coquette, Miss Frankland, and turning his back upon his superiors," as some of the indignant bystanders said. Even Colin's matronly friends, who pitied him and formed his mind, disapproved of his behavior. "She only means to make a fool of you, and you ought not to allow yourself to be taken in by it," said one of these patronesses in his ear, calling him aside. But fate had determined otherwise.

"Don't go away," said Lady Hallamshire. "I like Matty to introduce all her friends to me; and you two look as if you had known each other a long time," said the dowager, graciously, for she was pleased, like most women, by Colin's looks. "One would know him again if one met him," she added, in an audible aside; "he doesn't look exactly like everybody else, as most young men do. Who is he, Matty?" And Miss Frankland's *chaperone* turned the light of her countenance full upon Colin, quite indifferent to the fact that he had heard one part of her speech quite as well as the other. When a fine lady consents to enter the outer world, it is to be expected that she should behave herself as civilized people do among savages, and the English among the other nations of the world.

"Oh, yes! we have known each other a long time," said Matty, partly with a generous, partly with a mischievous, instinct. "My uncle knows Mr. Campbell's father very well, and Harry and he and I made acquaintance when we were children. I am sure you must have heard how nearly Harry was drowned once when we were at Kilchain Castle. It was Mr. Campbell who saved his life."

"Oh!" said Lady Hallamshire; "but I thought that was"—and then she stopped short. Looking at Colin again, her ladyship's experienced eye perceived that he was not arrayed with that perfection of apparel to which she was accustomed; but at the moment her eye caught his glowing face, half pleased, half haughty with that pride of lowliness which is of all pride the most defiant. "I am very glad to make Mr. Campbell's acquaintance,"—she went on so graciously that everybody forgot the pause. "Harry Frankland is a very dear young friend of mine, and we are all very much indebted to his deliverer."

It was just what a distinguished matron would have said in the circumstances in one

of Lady Hallamshire's novels; but, instead of remaining overcome with grateful confusion, as the hero ought to have done, Colin made an immediate reply.

"I cannot take the credit people give me," said the lad, with a little heat. "He happened to get into my boat when he was nearly exhausted—that is the whole business. There has been much more talk about it than was necessary. I cannot pretend even to be a friend of Mr. Frankland," said Colin, with the unnecessary explanatoriness of youth, "and I certainly did not save his life."

With which speech the young man disappeared out of sight amid the wondering assembly, which privately designated him a young puppy and a young prig, and by various other epithets, according to the individual mind of the speaker. As for Lady Hallamshire, she was considerably disgusted. "Your friend is original, I dare say; but I am not sure that he is quite civil," she said to Matty, who did not quite know whether to be vexed or pleased by Colin's abrupt withdrawal. Perhaps on the whole the young lady liked him better for having a mind of his own, notwithstanding his devotion, and for preferring to bestow his worship without the assistance of spectators. If he had been a man in the least possible as a lover, Miss Frankland might have been of a different opinion; but, as that was totally out of possibility, Matty liked, on the whole, that he should do what was ideally right, and keep up her conception of him. She gave her head a pretty toss of semi-defiance, and went across the room to Mrs. Jordan, to whom she was very amiable and caressing all the rest of the evening. But she still continued to watch with the corner of her eye the tall boyish figure which was now and then to be discerned in the distance, with those masses of brown hair heaped like clouds upon the forehead, which Colin's height made visible over the heads of many very superior people. She knew he was watching her and noted every movement she made, and she felt a little proud of the slave, who, though he was only the tutor and a poor farmer's son, had something in his eyes which nobody else within sight had any inkling of. Matty was rather clever in her way, which was as much different from Colin's as light from darkness. No man of a mental calibre like hers could have found him out; but she had a little insight, as a woman, which enabled her to perceive the greater height when she came within sight of it. And then poor Colin, all unconsciously, had given her such an advantage over him. He had laid his boy's heart at her feet, and, half in love, half in imagination, had made her the goddess of his youth. If she had thought it likely to do him any serious damage, perhaps Matty, who was a good girl enough, and was of some use to the rector and very popular among the poor in her own parish, might have done her duty by Colin, and crushed this pleasant folly in the bud. But then it did not occur to her that a "friendship" of which it was so very evident nothing could ever come could harm anybody. It did not occur to her that an ambitious Scotch boy, who knew no more of the world than a baby, and who had been fed upon all the tales of riches achieved and glories won which are the common fare of many a homely household, might possibly entertain a different opinion. So Matty asked all kinds of questions about him of Mrs. Jordan, and gave him now and then a little nod when she met his eye, and generally kept up a kind of special intercourse far more flattering to the youth than ordinary conversation. Poor Colin neither attempted nor wished to defend himself. He put his head under the yoke, and hugged his chains. He collected his verses, poor boy! when he went to his own room that night,—verses which he knew very well were true to him, but in which it would be rather difficult to explain the fatal stroke,—the grievous blow on which he had expatiated so vaguely that it might be taken to mean the death of his lady rather than the simple fact that she did not come to Kilchain Castle when he expected her. How to make her understand that this was the object of his lamentations puzzled him a little; for Colin knew enough of romance to be aware that the true lover does not venture to address the princess until he has so far conquered fortune as to make his suit with honor to her and fitness in the eyes of the world. The young tutor sat in his bare little room out of the way, and, with eyes that glowed over his midnight candle, looked into the future, and calculated visionary dates at which, if all went with him as he hoped, he might lay his trophies at his lady's feet. It is true that Matty herself fully intended by that time to have daughters ready to enter upon the round of conquest from which she should have retired into ma-

tron dignity; but no such profanity ever occurred to Colin. Thus the two thought of each other as they went to their rest—the one with all the delusions of heroic youthful love, the other with no delusions at all, but a half gratitude, half affection—a woman's compassionate fondness for the man who had touched her heart a little by giving her his, but whom it was out of the question ever to think of loving. And so the coils of fate began to throw themselves around the free-born feet of young Colin of Ramore.

CHAPTER XI.

Lady Hallamshire was a woman very accessible to a little judicious flattery, and very sensible of good living. She liked Mr. Jordan's liberal house, and she liked the court that was paid to her; and was not averse to lengthening out her visit, and converting three days into a fortnight, especially as her ladyship's youngest son, Horace Fitz-Gibbon, who was a lieutenant in the navy, was expected daily in the Clyde—at least his ship was, which comes to the same thing. Horace was a dashing young fellow enough, with nothing but his handsome face (he had his mother's nose, as everybody acknowledged, and, although now a dowager, she had been a great beauty in her day) and the honorable prefix to his name to help him on in the world. Lady Hallamshire had heard of an heiress or two about, and her maternal ambition was stimulated; and, at the same time, the grouse were bewitching, and the cooking most creditable. The only thing she was sorry for was Matty Frankland, her ladyship said, who never could stay more than a week anywhere, unless she was flirting with somebody, without being bored. Perhaps the necessary conditions had been obtained even at Ardmartin, for Matty bore up very well on the whole. She fulfilled the threat of making use of the tutor to the fullest extent; and Colin gave himself up to the enjoyment of his fool's paradise without a thought of flying from the dangerous felicity. They climbed the hills together, keeping far in advance of the companions, who overtook them only to find the mood change, and to leave behind in the descent the pair of loiterers, whose pace no calls nor advices, nor even the frequent shower, could quicken; and they rowed together over the lovely loch, about which Matty, having much fluency of language, and the adroitness of a little woman of the world in appropriating other people's sentiments, showed even more enthusiasm than Colin. Perhaps she, too, enjoyed this wonderful holiday in the life which already she knew by heart, and found no novelty in. To be adored, to be invested with all the celestial attributes, to feel herself the one grand object in somebody's world, is pleasant to a woman. Matty almost felt as if she were in love, without the responsibility of the thing, or any need for troubling herself about what it was going to come to. It could come to nothing—except an expression of gratitude and kindness to the young man who had saved her cousin's life. When everything was so perfectly safe, there could be no harm in the enjoyment; and the conclusion Matty came to, as an experimental philosopher, was, that to fall in love really, excepting the responsibilities, would be an exciting but highly troublesome amusement. She could not help thinking to herself how anxious she should be about Colin if such a thing were possible. How those mistakes which he could not help making, and which at present did not disturb her in the least, would make her glow and burn with shame, if he were really anything to her. And yet he was a great deal to her. She was as good as if she had been really possessed by that love on which she speculated, and almost as happy; and Colin was in her mind most of the hours of the day when she was awake, and a few of those in which she slept. The difference was, that Matty contemplated quite calmly the inevitable fact of leaving Ardmartin on Monday, and did not think it in the least likely that she would break her heart over the parting; and that, even in imagination, she never for a moment connected her fate with that of her young adorer. As for the poor youth himself, he went deeper and deeper into the enchanted land. He went without any resistance, giving himself up to the sweet fate. She had read the poems, of course, and had inquired eagerly into that calamity which occupied so great a part in them, and had found out what it was, and had blushed (as Colin thought), but was not angry. What could a shy young lover, whose lips were sealed by honor, but who knew his eyes, his actions, his productions to be alike eloquent, desire more? Sometimes Lady Hallamshire consented to weigh down the boat, which dipped

hugely at the stern under her and made Colin's task a hard one. Sometimes the tutor, who counted for nobody, was allowed to conduct a cluster of girls, of whom he saw but one, over the peaceful water. Lessons did not count for much in those paradisiacal days. Miss Frankland begged holidays for the boys; begged that they might go excursions with her, and make picnics on the hillside, and accompany her to all sorts of places, till Mrs. Jordan was entirely captivated with Matty. She never saw a young lady so taken up with children, the excellent woman said; and prophesied that Miss Matty would make a wonderful mother of a family when her time came. As for the tutor, Mrs. Jordan, too, took him for a cipher, and explained to him how improving it was for the boys to be in good society, by way of apologizing to Colin. At length there occurred one blessed day in which Colin and his boys embarked with Miss Frankland alone, to row across to Ramore. "My uncle has so high an opinion of Mr. Campbell," Matty said, very demurely; "I know he would never forgive me if I did not go to see him." As for Colin, his blessedness was tempered on that particular occasion by a less worthy feeling. He felt, if not ashamed of Ramore, at least apologetic of it and its accessories, which apology took, as was natural to a Scotch lad of his years, an argumentative and defiant tone.

"It is a poor house enough," said Colin, as he pointed it out, gleaming white upon the hillside, to Miss Matty,—who pretended to remember it perfectly, but who after all had not the least idea which was Ramore,—"but I would not change with anybody I know. We are better off in the cottages than you in the parlors. Comfort is a poor sort of heathen deity to be worshipped as you worship him in England. As for us, we have a higher standard," said the lad, half in sport and more than half in earnest. The two young Jordans, after a little gaping at the talk which went over their heads (for Miss Matty was wonderfully taken up with the children only when their mother was present), had betaken themselves to the occupation of sailing a little yacht from the bows of their boat, and were very well behaved and disturbed nobody.

"Yes," said Matty, in an absent tone. "By the way, I wish very much you would tell me why you rejected my uncle's proposal about going to Oxford. I suppose you *have* a higher standard; but then they say you don't have such good scholars in Scotland. I am sure I beg your pardon if I am wrong."

"But I did not say you were wrong," said Colin, who, however, grew fiery red and burned to prove his scholarship equal to that of any Eton lad or Christchurch man. "They say, on the other side, that a man may get through without disgrace, in Oxford or Cambridge, who doesn't know how to spell English," said the youth, with natural exasperation, and took a few long strokes which sent the boat flying across the summer ripples, and consumed his angry energy. He was quite ready to sneer at Scotch scholarship in his own person, when he and his fellows were together, and even to sigh on the completer order and profounder studies of the great universities of England; but to acknowledge the inferiority of his country in any particular to the lady of his wishes, was beyond the virtue of a Scotchman and a lover.

"I did not speak of stupid people," said Miss Matty; "and I am sure I did not mean to vex you. Of course I know you are so very clever in Scotland; everybody allows *that*. I love Scotland so much," said the politic little woman; "but then every country has its weak points and its strong points; and you have not told me yet why you rejected my uncle's proposal. He wished you very much to accept it; and so did I," said the siren, after a little pause, lifting upon Colin the half-subdued light of her blue eyes.

"Why did you wish it?" the lad asked, as was to be expected, bending forward to hear the answer to his question.

"Oh, look there, little Ben will be overboard in another minute," said Matty, and then she continued lower, "I can't tell you, I am sure; because I thought you were going to turn out a great genius, I suppose."

"But you don't believe *that?*" said Colin; "you say so only to make the Holy Loch a little more like paradise; and that is unnecessary to-day," the lad went on, glancing round him with eyes full of the light that never was on sea or land. Though he was not a poet, he had what was almost better,—a poetic soul. The great world moved for him always amid everlasting melodies, the morning and the evening stars singing together even through the common day. Just now his cup was about running over. What if, to crown

all, God, not content with giving him life and love, had indeed visibly to the sight of others, if not to his own, bestowed genius also, the other gift most prized of youth. Somehow, he could not contradict that divine peradventure. "If it were so," he said under his breath, "if it were so!" and the other little soul opposite, who had lost sight of Colin at that moment, and did not know through what bright mists he was wandering, strained her limited vision after him, and wondered and asked what he meant.

"If it were so," said Matty, "what then?" Most likely she expected a compliment—and Colin's compliments being made only by inference, and with a shyness and an emotion unknown to habitual manufacturers of such articles, were far from being unpleasant offerings to Miss Matty, who was slightly *blasé* of the common coin.

But Colin only shook his head, and bent his strong young frame to the oars, and shook back the clouds of brown hair from his half-visible forehead. The boat flew like a swallow along the crisp bosom of the loch. Miss Matty did not quite know what to make of the silence, not being in love. She took off her glove and held her pretty hand in the water over the side of the boat, but the loch was cold, and she withdrew it presently. What was he thinking of? she wondered. Having lost sight of him thus, she was reluctant to begin the conversation anew, lest she might perhaps say something which would betray her non-comprehension, and bring her down from that pedestal which, after all, it was pleasant to occupy. Feminine instinct at last suggested to Matty what was the very best thing to do in the circumstances. She had a pretty voice, and perfect ease in the use of it, and knew exactly what she could do, as people of limited powers generally can. So she began to sing, murmuring to herself at first as she stooped over the water, and then rising into full voice. As for Colin, that last touch was almost too much for him; he had never heard her sing before, and he could not help marvelling, as he looked at her, why Providence should have lavished such endowments upon one, and left so many others unprovided—and fell to rowing softly, dropping his oars into the sunshine with as little sound as possible, to do full justice to the song. When Matty had come to the end, she turned on him quite abruptly, and, almost before the last note had died from her lips, repeated her question. "Now tell me why did you refuse to go to Oxford?" said the little siren, looking full into Colin's face.

"Because I can't be dependent upon any man, and because I had done nothing to entitle me to such a recompense," said Colin, who was taken by surprise; "you made a mistake about that business," he said, with a slight sudden flush of color, and immediately fell to his oars again with all his might.

"It is very odd," said Miss Matilda. "Why don't you like Harry? He is nothing particular, but he is a very good sort of boy, and it is so strange that you should have such a hatred to each other—I mean to say, he is not at all fond of you," she continued, with a laugh. "I believe he is jealous because we all talk of you so much, and it must be rather hard upon a boy after all to have his life *saved*, and to be expected to be grateful; for I don't believe a word you say," said Miss Matty. "I know the rights of it better than you do—you *did* save his life."

"I hope you will quite release him from the duty of being grateful," said Colin; "I don't suppose there is either love or hatred between us. We don't know each other to speak of, and I don't see any reason why we should be fond of each other;" and again Colin sent the boat forward with long, rapid strokes, getting rid of the superfluous energy which was roused within him by hearing Frankland's name.

"It is very odd," said Matty again. "I wonder if you are fated to be rivals, and come in each other's way. If I knew any girl that Harry was in love with, I should not like to introduce you to her," said Miss Matilda, and she stopped and laughed a little, evidently at something in her own mind. "How odd it would be if you were to be rivals through life," she continued; "I am sure I can't tell which I should most wish to win—my cousin, who is a very good boy in his way, or you, who puzzle me so often," said the little witch, looking suddenly up into Colin's eyes.

"How is it possible I can puzzle you?" he said; but the innocent youth was flattered by the sense of superiority involved. "There can be very little rivalry between an English baronet and a Scotch minister," continued Colin. "We shall never come in each other's way."

"And *must* you be a Scotch minister?"

said Miss Matty, softly. There was a regretful tone in her voice, and she gave an appealing glance at him, as if she were remonstrating against that ministry. Perhaps it was well for Colin that they were so near the shore, and that he had to give all his attention to the boat, to secure the best landing for those delicate little feet. As he leaped ashore himself, ankle-deep into the bright but cold water, Colin could not but remember his boyish scorn of Henry Frankland, and that dislike of wet feet which was so amusing and wonderful to the country boy. Matters were wonderfully changed now-a-days for Colin; but still he plunged into the water with a certain relish, and pulled the boat ashore with a sense of his strength and delight in it, which at such a moment it was sweet to experience. As for Miss Matty, she found the hill very steep, and accepted the assistance of Colin's arm to get over the sharp pebbles of the beach.

"One ought to wear strong boots," she said, holding out the prettiest little foot, which indeed had been perfectly revealed before by the festooned dress, which Miss Matty found so convenient on the hills. When Colin's mother saw from her window this pair approaching alone (for the Jordan boys were ever so far behind, still coquetting with their toy yacht), it was not wonderful if her heart beat more quickly than usual. She jumped, with her womanish imagination, at all kinds of incredible results, and saw her Colin happy and great, by some wonderful conjunction of his own genius and the favor of others, which it would have been hopeless to attempt any comprehension of. The mistress altogether puzzled and overwhelmed Miss Matty by the greeting she gave her. The little woman of the world looked in utter amazement at the poor farmer's wife, whom she meant to be very kind and amiable to, but who, to her consternation, took the superior part by right of nature; for Mrs. Campbell, having formed her own idea, was altogether obtuse to her visitor's condescensions. The parlor at Ramore looked dingy certainly after the drawing-rooms of Ardmartin, and all the business of the farm was manifestly going on as usual; but even Colin, sensitive as he had become to all the differences of circumstances, was puzzled, like Matty, and felt his mother to have suddenly developed into a kind of primitive princess. Perhaps the poor boy guessed why, and felt that his love was elevating not only himself but everybody who belonged to him; but Miss Matty, who did not understand how profound emotion could affect anybody's manners, nor how her young admirer's mother could be influenced by his sentiments, was entirely in the dark, and could not help being immensely impressed by the bearing and demeanor of the mistress of Ramore.

"I'm glad it's such a bonny day," said Colin's mother; "it looks natural and seemly to see you here on a day like this. As for Colin, he aye brings the light with him, but no often such sunshine as you. I canna lay any great feast before you," said the farmer's wife with a smile, "but young things like you are aye near enough heaven to be pleased with the common mercies. After a', if I was a queen, I couldna offer you anything better than the wheat bread and the fresh milk," said the mistress; and she set down on the table, with her own tender hands, the scones for which Ramore was famous, and the abundant overrunning jug of milk, which was not to be surpassed anywhere, as she said. Matty sat down with an odd involuntary conviction that Mr. Jordan's magnificent table on the other side of the loch offered but a poor hospitality in comparison. Though she laughed at herself, we know, after, it was quite impossible at that moment to feel otherwise than respectful. "I never saw anybody with such beautiful manners," she said to Colin as they went back to the boat. She did not take his arm this time, but walked very demurely after him down the narrow path, feeling upon her the eyes of the mistress, who was standing at her door as usual to see her son go away. Matty could not help a little natural awe of the woman, whose fierce eyes were watching her. She could manage her aunt perfectly, and did not care in the least for Lady Hallamshire, who was the most accommodating of *chaperones*, but Mrs. Campbell's sweet looks and generous reception of her son's enslaver somehow overwhelmed Matty. The mistress looked at the girl as if she considered her capable of all the grand and simple emotions, and Matty was half-ashamed and half-frightened, and did not feel able at the moment to pursue her usual amusement. The row back, to which Colin had been looking with a thrill of expectation, was silent and grave, in comparison with all their former expeditions, notwithstanding that this was the last time they were likely to see each

other alone. Poor Colin thought of Lauderdale and his philosophy, for the first time for many days, when he had to stop behind to place the boat in safety on the beach, even Matty, who generally waited for him, skipping up the avenue as fast as she could go, with the little Jordans beside her. Never yet was reality which came truly up to the expectation. Here was an end of his fool's paradise; he vexed himself by going over and over all that had passed, wondering if anything had offended her, and then thought of Ramore with a pang at his heart—a pang of something nobler than the mere bitterness of contrast, which sometimes makes a poor man over-ashamed of his home. But all this time the true reason for this new-born reserve—which Miss Matty kept up victoriously until about the close of the evening, when, being utterly bored, she forgot her good resolution and called him to her side again—was quite unsuspected by Colin. He could not divine how susceptible to the opinion of women was the woman's heart, even when it retained but little of its first freshness. Matty was not startled by Colin's love, but she was by his mother's belief in it and herself; it stopped her short in her careless career, and suggested endings that were not pleasant to think of. If she had been left in amazement for a day or two after, it might have been well for Colin; but, being bored, she returned to her natural amusement, and this interruption did him no good in the end.

CHAPTER XII.

The parting of the two who had been thrown so much together, who had thought so much of each other, and who had, notwithstanding, so few things in common, was as near an absolute parting as is practicable in this world of constant commotion, where everybody meets everybody else in the most unlikely regions. Colin dared not propose to write to her; dared not, indeed,—being withheld by the highest impulses of honor,—venture to say to her what was in his heart; and Miss Matty herself was a little silent,—perhaps a little moved,—and could not utter any commonplaces about meeting again, as she had intended to do. So they said good-by to each other in a kind of absolute way, as if it might be for ever and ever. As for Matty, who was not in love, but whose heart was touched, and who had a vague, instinctive sense that she might never more meet anybody in her life like this country lad—perhaps she had enough generosity left in her to feel that it would be best they should not meet again. But Colin had no such thoughts. He knew in his heart that one time—how or when he knew not—he should yet go to her feet and offer what he had to offer: everything else in the world except that one thing was doubtful to Colin, but concerning that he was confident, and entertained no fear. And so they parted; she, perhaps, for half an hour or so, the more deeply moved of the two. Miss Matty, however, was just as captivating as usual in the next house they went to, where there were one or two people worth looking at, and the company in general was more interesting than at Ardmartin; but Colin, for his part, spent most of the evening on the hillside, revolving in the silence a hundred tumultuous thoughts. It was the end of September, and the nights were cold on the Holy Loch. There was not even a moon to enliven the landscape, and all that could be seen was the cold blue glimmer of the water, upon which Colin looked down with a kind of desolate sense of elevation—elevation of the mind and of the heart, which made the grief of parting look like a grand moral agent, quickening all his powers, and concentrating his strength. Henceforward the strongest of personal motives was to inspire him in all his conflicts. He was going into the battle of life with his lady's colors on his helmet, like a knight of romance, and failure was not to be thought of as a possibility. As he set his face to the wind going back to Ardmartin, the pale sky lightened over the other side of the loch, and underneath the breaking clouds, which lay so black on the hills, Colin saw the distant glimmer of a light, which looked like the light in the parlor window at Ramore. Just then a sudden gust swept across the hillside, throwing over him a shower of falling leaves, and big raindrops from the last shower which had been hanging on the branches. There was not a soul on the road but Colin himself, nor anything to be seen far or near, except the dark tree-tops in the Lady's Glen, which were sighing in the night wind, and the dark side of Ardmartin, where all the shutters were closed, and one soft star hanging among the clouds just over the spot where that little friendly light in the farmhouse of Ramore held up its glimmer of human conso-

lation into the darkness. It was not Hero's torch to light his love—was it, perhaps, a sober gleam of truth and wisdom to call the young Leander back from those bitter waters in which he could but perish? All kinds of fancies were in Colin's mind as he went back, facing the wind, to the dull, closed-up house, from which the enchantment had departed; but among them there occurred no thought of discouragement from this pursuit upon which now his heart was set. He would have drowned himself, could he have imagined it possible that he could cease to love—and so long as he loved, how was it possible to fail?

"And *must* you be a Scotch minister?" When Colin went home a fortnight later to make his preparations for returning to the University, he was occupied, to the exclusion of almost all other questions, by revolving this. It is true that at his age, and with his inexperience, it was possible to imagine that even a Scotch minister, totally unfavored by fortune, might, by mere dint of genius, raise himself to heights of fame sufficient to bring Sir Thomas Frankland's niece within his reach—but the thing was unlikely, even to the lively imagination of twenty. And it was the fact that Colin had no special "vocation" toward the profession for which he was being trained. He had been educated and destined for it all his life, and his thoughts had a natural balance that way. But otherwise there was no personal impulse in his mind toward what Mrs. Jordan called "the work of the ministry." Hitherto his personal impulses had been neither for nor against. Luckily for Colin, and many of his contemporaries, there were so many things to object to in the Church of Scotland, so many defects of order and external matters which required reformation, that they were less strongly tempted to become sceptical in matters of faith than their fellows elsewhere. As for Colin himself, he had fallen off, no doubt, from the certainty of his boyhood upon many important matters; but the lad, though he was a Scotsman, was happily illogical, and suffered very little by his doubts. Nothing could have made him sceptical, in any real sense of the word, and accordingly there was no repulsion in Colin's mind against his future profession. But now! He turned it over in his mind night and day in the interval between Matty's departure and his own return to Ramore. What if, instead of a Scotch minister, incapable of promotion, and to whom ambition itself was unlawful, he were to address himself to the Bar, where there were at least chances and possibilities of fame?. He was occupied with this question, to the exclusion of any other, as he crossed the loch in the little stream, and landed on the pier near Ramore, where his young brothers met him, eager to carry his travelling-bag, and convey him home in triumph. Colin was aware that such a proposal on his part would-occasion grievous disappointment at home, and he did not know how to introduce the subject, or disclose his wavering wishes. It was a wonderful relief, as well as confusion to him, when he entered the Ramore parlor, to find Lauderdale in possession of the second arm-chair, opposite the mistress's, which was sacred to visitors. He had arrived only the evening before, having left Glasgow "for a holiday, like anybody else, in the saut-water season," said the gentle giant, "the first I ever mind of having in my life. But I'm very well off in my present situation," he said, breaking off suddenly, with a twinkle of mirth in his eye, as was usual when he referred to his occupation, the nature of which was unknown even to his dearest friends.

"It's ower cauld to have much good of the water," said the mistress; "the boat's no laid up yet, waiting for Colin, but the weather's awfu' winterly—no to say soft," she added, with a little sigh, "for it's aye soft weather among the lochs, though we've had less rain than common this year."

And as the mistress spoke, the familiar, well-known rain came sweeping down over the hills. It had the usual effect upon the mind of the sensitive woman. "We maun take a' the good we can of you, laddie," she said, laying her kind hand on her boy's shoulder, "it's only a sight we get now in passing. He's owre much thought of, and made of, to spend his time at hame," said the mistress, turning, with a half-reproachful pride to Lauderdale; "I'll be awfu' sorry if the rain lasts, on your account. But, for myself, I could put up with a little soft weather, to see mair of Colin; no that I want him to stay at hame when he might be enjoying himself," the mother added, with a compunction. Soft weather on the Holy Loch signified rain and mist, and everything that was most discouraging to Mrs. Campbell's soul; but she was

ready to undergo anything the skies could inflict upon her, if fortified by the society of her son.

It was the second night after this before Colin could make up his mind to introduce the subject of which his thoughts were full. Tea was over by that time, and all the household assembled in the parlor. The farmer himself had just laid down his newspaper, from which he had been reading to them scraps of country gossip, somewhat to the indignation of the mistress, who, for her part, liked to hear what was going on in the world, and took a great interest in Parliament and the foreign intelligence. "I canna say that I'm heeding about the muckle apple that's been grown in Clydesdale, nor the new bailies in Greenock," said the farmer's wife. "If you would read us something wise-like about the poor oppressed Italians, or what Louis Napoleon is thinking about—I canna excuse him for what they ca' the *coo-deta*," said Mrs. Campbell; "but for a' that, I take a great interest in him;" and with this the mistress took up her knitting with a pleasant anticipation of more important news to come.

"There's nothing in the *Herald* about Louis Napoleon," said the farmer, "nor the Italians neither—no that I put much faith in those Italians; they'll quarrel amang themselves when there's naebody else to quarrel wi'—though I'm no saying onything against Cavour and Garibaldi. The paper's filled full o' something mair immediately interesting—at least, it ought to have mair interest to you wi' a son that's to be a minister. Here's three columns mair about that Dreepdaily case. It may be a grand thing for popular rights, but it's an awfu' ordeal for a man to gang through," said big Colin, looking ruefully at his son.

"I was looking at that," said Lauderdale. "It's his prayers the folk seem to object to most—and no wonder. I've heard the man mysel', and his sermon was not bad reasoning, if anybody wanted reasoning; but it's aye a wonderful thing to me the way that new preachers take upon them to explain matters to the Almighty," said Colin's friend, reflectively. "So far as I can see, we've little to ask in our worship; but we have an awfu' quantity of things to explain."

"It is an ordeal I could never submit to," said Colin, with perhaps a little more heat than was necessary. "I'd rather starve than be set up as a target for a parish. It is quite enough to make a cultivated clergy impossible for Scotland. Who would submit to expose one's life, all one's antecedents, all one's qualities of mind and individualities of language to the stupid criticism of a set of boors? It is a thing I never would submit to," said the lad, meaning to introduce his doubts upon the general subject by this means.

"I dinna approve of such large talking," said the farmer, laying down his newspaper. "It's a great protection to popular rights. I would sooner run the risk of disgusting a fastidious laird now and then, than put in a minister that gives nae satisfaction; and if you canna submit to it, Colin, you'll never get a kirk, which would be worse than criticism," said his father, looking full into his face. The look brought a conscious color to Colin's cheeks.

"Well," said the young man, feeling himself driven into a corner, and taking what courage he could from the emergency, "one might choose another profession;" and then there was a pause, and everybody looked with alarm and amazement on the bold speaker. "After all, the Church is not the only thing in Scotland," said Colin, feeling the greatness of his temerity. "Nobody ventures to say it is in a satisfactory state. How often do I hear you criticising the sermon and finding fault with the prayers? and, as for Lauderdale, he finds fault with everything. Then, look how much a man has to bear before he gets a church as you say. As soon as he has his presentation, the Presbytery comes together and asks if there are any objections; and then the parish sits upon the unhappy man; and, when everybody has had their turn, and all his peculiarities and personal defects and family history have been discussed before the Presbytery, and put in the newspapers, if they happen to be amusing, then the poor wretch has to sign a confession which nobody"—

"Stop you there, Colin, my man," said the farmer, "that's enough at one time. I wouldna say that you were a'thegither wrong as touching the sermon and the prayers. It's awfu' to go in from the like of this hillside and weary the very heart out of you in a close kirk, listening to a man preaching that has nothing in this world to say. I am whiles inclined to think," said big Colin, thoughtfully—"laddies, you may as well go to your

beds. You'll see Colin the morn, and ye canna understand what we're talking about. I am whiles disposed to think," he continued after a pause, during which the younger members of the family had left the room, after a little gentle persuasion on the part of the mistress, "when I go into the kirk on a bonnie day, such as we have by times on the loch, baith in summer and winter, that it's an awfu' waste of time. You lose a' the bonnie prospect, and you get naething but weariness for your pains. I've aye been awfu' against set prayers read out of a book; but I canna but allow the English chapel has an advantage there, for nae fool can spoil your devotion as I've heard it done many and many's the time. I ken our minister's prayers very near as well as if they were written down," said the farmer of Ramore, "and the maist part of them is quite nonsense. Ony little scraps o' real supplication there may be in them, you could get through in five minutes; the rest is a' remarks, that I never can discriminate if they're meant for me or for the Almighty; but my next neibor would think me an awfu' heathen if he heard what I'm saying," he continued, with a smile; "and I'm far from sure that I would get a mair merciful judgment from the wife herself."

The mistress had been very busy with her knitting while her husband was speaking; but, notwithstanding her devotion to her work, she was uneasy and could not help showing it. "If we had been our lane, it would have been naething," she said to Colin, privately; "but afore yon man that's a stranger and doesna ken!" With which sentiment she sat listening, much disturbed in her mind. "It's no a thing to say before the bairns," she said, when she was thus appealed to, "nor before folk that dinna ken you. A stranger might think you were a careless man to hear you speak," said Mrs. Campbell, turning to Lauderdale with a bitter vexation, "for a' that you hanna missed the kirk half a dozen times a' the years I have kent you, and that's a long time," said the mother, lifting her soft eyes to her boy. When she looked at him, she remembered that he, too, had been rash in his talk. "You're turning awfu' like your father, Colin," said the mistress, taking up the same thoughtless way of talking. "But I think different for a' you say. Our ain kirk is aye our ain kirk to you as well as to me in spite o' your speaking. I'm well accustomed to their ways," she said, with a smile, to Lauderdale, who, so far from being the dangerous observer she thought him, had gone off at a tangent into his own thoughts.

"The Confession of Faith is a real respectable historical document," said Lauderdale. "I might not like to commit myself to a' it says, if you were to ask me; but then I'm not the kind o' man that has a heart to commit myself to anything in the way of intellectual truth. I wouldna bind myself to say that I would stand by any document a year after it was put forth, far less a hundred years. There's things in it naebody believes—for example, about the earth being made in six days; but I would not advise a man to quarrel with his kirk and his profession for the like of that. I put no dependence on geology for my part, nor any of the sciences. How can I tell but somebody might make a discovery the morn that would upset all their fine stories? But, on the whole, I've very little to say against the Confession. It's far more guarded about predestination and so forth than might have been expected. Every man that has a head on his shoulders believes in predestination; though I would not be the man to commit myself to any statement on the subject. The like of me is good for little," said Colin's friend, stretching his long limbs toward the fire, "but I've great ambition for that callant. He's not a common callant, though I'm speaking before his face," said Lauderdale; "it would be terrible mortifying to me to see him put himself in a corner and refuse the yoke."

"If I cannot bear the yoke conscientiously, I cannot bear it at all," said Colin, with a little heat. "If you can't put your name to what you don't believe, why should I?—and as for ambition," said the lad, "ambition! what does it mean?—a country church, and two or three hundred ploughmen to criticise me, and the old wives to keep in good humor, and the young ones to drink tea with—is that work for a man?" cried the youth, whose mind was agitated, and who naturally had said a good deal more than he intended to say. He looked round in a little alarm after this rash utterance, not knowing whether he had been right or wrong in such a disclosure of his sentiments. The father and mother looked at each other, and then turned their eyes simultaneously upon their son. Perhaps

the mistress had a glimmering of the correct meaning which Colin would not have betrayed wittingly, had it cost him his life.

"Eh, Colin, sometime ye'll think better," she cried under her breath,—"after a' our pride in you and our hopes!" The tears came into her eyes as she looked at him. "It's mair honor to serve God than to get on in the world," said the mistress. The disappointment went to her heart, as Colin could see; she put her hands hastily to her eyes to clear away the moisture which dimmed them. "It's maybe naething but a passing fancy; but it's no what I expected to hear from any bairn of mine," she said, with momentary bitterness. As for the farmer, he looked on with a surprised and inquiring countenance.

"There has some change come over you, Colin, what has happened?" said his father. "I'm no a man that despises money, nor thinks it as in to get on in the world; but it's only fools that quarrel wi' what's within their reach for envy of what they can never win to. If ye had displayed a strong bent any other way I wouldna have minded," said big Colin—"but it's aye appeared to me that to write in a kind of general way on whatever subject might chance to turn up was mair the turn of your mind than ony other line, which is a sure sign you were born to be a minister. It's the new-fangled dishes at Ardmartin that have spoiled the callant's digestion," said the farmer with a twinkle of humor in his eye—"they tell me that discontent and meesery of a' kinds proceeds no from the mind but from the mucous membrane. He'll come back to his natural inclination when he's been at home for a day or two. I would na' say but Gregory's mixture was a great moral agent according to the new philosophy," said big Colin, laying his large hand on his son's shoulder with a pressure which meant more than his words; but the youth was vexed and impatient, and imagined himself laughed at, which is the most dreadful of insults, at Colin's age, and in his circumstances. He paid no attention to his father's looks, but plunged straightway into vehement declaration of his sentiments, to which the elder people around him listened with many complications of feeling unknown to Colin. The lad thought, as was natural at his years, that nobody had ever felt before him the bondage of circumstance, and that it was a new revelation he was making to his little audience. If he could have imagined that both the men were looking at him with the half-sympathy, half-pity, half-envy of their maturer years, remembering as vividly as if it had occurred but yesterday similar outbreaks of impatience and ambition and natural resistance to all the obstacles of life, Colin would have felt deeply humiliated in his youthful fervor; or, if he could but have penetrated the film of softening dew in his mother's eyes, and beheld there the woman's perennial spectatorship of that conflict which goes on forever. Instead of that, he thought he was making a new revelation to his hearers; he thought he was cruel to them, tearing asunder their pleasant mists of illusion, and disenchanting their eyes; he had not an idea that they knew all about it better than he did, and were watching him along the familiar path which they all had trod in different ways, and of which they knew the inevitable ending. Colin, in the heat and impatience of his youth, took full advantage of his moment of utterance. He poured forth in his turn that flood of immeasurable discontent with all conditions and restrictions, which is the privilege of his years. To be sure, the restrictions and conditions surrounding himself were, so far as he knew, the sole objects of that indignation and scorn and defiance which came to his lips by force of nature. The mistress listened, for her part, with that mortification which is always the woman's share. She understood him, sympathized with him, and yet did not understand nor could tolerate his dissent from all that in her better judgment she had decided upon on his behalf. She was far more tender, but she was less tolerant than the other spectators of Colin's outburst; and mingled with all her personal feeling was a sense of wounded pride and mortification, that her boy had thus betrayed himself "before a stranger." "If we had been our lane, it would have been less matter," she said to herself, as she wiped the furtive tears hurriedly from the corners of her eyes.

When Colin had come to an end, there was a pause. The boy himself thought it was a pause of horror and consternation, and perhaps was rather pleased to produce an effect in some degree corresponding to his own excitement. After that moment of silence, however, the farmer got up from his chair. "It's very near time we were a' gaun to our

beds," said big Colin. "I'll take a look round to see that the beasts are comfortable, and then we'll have in the hot water. You and me can have a talk the morn," said the farmer to his son. That was all the reply which the youth received from the parental authorities. When the master went out to look after the beasts, Lauderdale followed to the door, where Colin in another moment strayed after him, considerably mortified, to tell the truth; for even his mother addressed herself to the question of "hot water," which implied various other accessories of the homely supper-table; and the young man, in his excitement and elevation of feeling, felt as if he had suddenly tumbled down out of the stormy but lofty firmament, into which he was soaring—down with a shock, into the embraces of the homely, tenacious earth. He went after his friend, and stood by Lauderdale's side, looking out into a darkness so profound that it made his eyes ache and confused his very mind. The only gleam of light visible in earth or heaven was big Colin's lantern, which showed a tiny gleam from the door of the byre where the farmer was standing. All the lovely landscape round the loch and the hills, the sky and the clouds, lay unseen,—hidden in the night. "Which is an awfu' grand moral lesson, if we had true sense to discern it," said the voice of Lauderdale, ascending half-way up to the clouds; "for the loch has na vanished, as might be supposed, but only the light. As for you, callant," said the philosopher, "you hae neither the light nor the darkness as yet, but are aye seeing miraculous effects like yon man Turner's pictures, Northern Streamers, or Aurora Borealis, or whatever ye may call it. And it's but just you should have your day;" with which words Lauderdale heaved a great sigh, which moved the clouds of hair upon Colin's forehead, and even seemed to disturb for a moment the profound gloom of the night.

"What do you mean by having my day?" said Colin, who was affronted by the suggestion. "You know I have said nothing that is not true. Can I help it if I see the difficulties of my own position more clearly than you do, who are not in my circumstances?" cried the lad with a little indignation. Lauderdale, who was watching the lantern gliding out and in through the darkness, was some time before he made any reply.

"I'm no surprised at yon callant Leander, when one comes to think of it," he said, in his reflective way; "it's a fine symbol, that Hero in her tower. Maybe she took the lamp from the altar and left the household god in darkness," said the calm philosopher; "but that makes no difference to the story. I would na' say but I would swim the Hellespont myself for such an inducement—or the Holy Loch—it's little matter which — but whiles she lets fall the torch before you get to the end"—

"What on earth, do you mean? or what has Hero to do with me?" cried Colin, with a secret flush of shame and rage, which the darkness concealed, but which he could scarcely restrain.

"I was not speaking of you—and after all, it's but a fable," said Lauderdale; "most history is fable, you know; it's no actual events (which I never believe in, for my part), but the instincts o' the human mind that make history, and that's how the Heros and Leanders are aye to be accounted for. He was drowned in the end like most people," said Lauderdale, turning back to the parlor where the mistress was seated, pondering with a troubled countenance upon this new aspect of her boy's life. Amid the darkness of the world outside, this tender woman sat in the sober radiance of her domestic hearth, surrounded and enshrined by light; but she was not like Hero, on the tower. Colin, too, came back, following his friend with a flush of excitement upon his youthful countenance. After all, the idea was not displeasing to the young man. The Hellespont, or the Holy Loch, was nothing to the bitter waters which he was prepared to breast for the sake of the imaginary torch held up in the hand of that imaginary woman who was beckoning Colin, as he thought, into the unknown world. Life was beginning anew in his person, and all the fables had to be enacted over again; and what did it matter to the boy's heroic fancy, if he, too, should go to swell the records of the noble martyrs, and be drowned, as Lauderdale said, like most people in the end.

There was no more conversation upon that important subject until next morning, when the household of Ramore got up early, and sat down to breakfast before it was perfect daylight; but Colin's heart jumped to his mouth, and a visible thrill went through the whole family, when the farmer came in from his early inspection of all the byres and stables, with another letter from Sir Thomas Frankland conspicuous in his hand.

PART V.—CHAPTER XIII.

"The question is, will ye go or will ye stay?" said big Colin of Ramore; "but for this, you and me might have had a mair serious question to discuss. I see a providence in it for my part. You're but a callant; it will do you nae harm to wait; and you'll be in the way of seeing the world at—what do they call the place? If your mother has nae objections, and ye see your ain way to accepting, I'll be very well content. It's awfu' kind o' Sir Thomas after the way ye've rejected a' his advances; but, no doubt he's heard that you got on gey weel, on the whole, at your ain college," said the farmer, with a little complacency. They were sitting late over the breakfast-table, the younger boys looking on with eager eyes, wondering over Colin's wonderful chances, and feeling severely the contrast of their own lot, who had to take up the ready satchel and the "piece," which was to occupy their healthful appetites till the evening, and hurry off three miles down the loch to school. As for Archie, he had been long gone to his hard labor on the farm, and the mother and father and the visitor were now sitting—a little committee—upon Colin's prospects, which the lad himself contemplated with a mixture of delight and defiance wonderful to see.

"It's time for the school, bairns," said the farmer's wife; "be good laddies, and dinna linger on the road either coming or going. Ye'll get apples apiece in the press. I couldna give ony advice, if you ask me," said the mistress, looking at her son with her tender eyes: "Colin, my man, it's no for me nor your father either to say one thing or another—it's you that must decide—it's your ain well-being and comfort and happiness."—Here the mistress stopped short with an emotion which nobody could explain; and at which even Colin, who had the only clew to it, looked up out of his own thoughts, with a momentary surprise.

"Hoot," said the farmer; "you're aye thinking of happiness, you women. I hope the laddie's happiness doesna lie in the power of a year's change one way or another. I canna see that it will do him any harm—especially after what he was saying last night—to pause awhile and take a little thought; and here's the best opportunity he could well have. But he doesna say anything himself—and if you're against it, Colin, speak out. It's your concern, most of all, as your mother says."

"The callant's in a terrible swither," said Lauderdale, with a smile,—"he'll have it, and he'll no have it. For one thing, it's an awfu' disappointment to get your ain way just after you've made up your mind that you're an injured man; and he's but a callant after all, and kens no better. For my part," said the philosopher, "I'm no fond of changing when you've once laid your plans. No man can tell what terrible difference a turn in the path may lead to. It's aye best to go straight on. But there's aye exceptions," continued Lauderdale, laying his hand on Colin's shoulder. "So far as I can see, there's no reason in this world why the callant should not stand still a moment and taste the sweetness of his lot. He's come to man's estate, and the heavens have never gloomed on him yet. There's no evil in him, that I can see," said Colin's friend, with an unusual trembling in his voice; "but for human weakness, it might have been the lad Michael or Gabriel, out of heaven, that's been my companion these gladsome years. It may be but sweetness and blessing that's in store for him. I know no reason why he shouldna pause while the sun's shining, and see God's meaning. It cannot be but good."

The lad's friend who understood him best stopped short, like his mother, with something in his throat that marred his utterance. Why was it? Colin looked up with the sunshine in his eyes, and laughed with a little annoyance, a little impatience. He was no more afraid of his lot, nor of what the next turn in the path would bring, than a child is who knows no evil. Life was not solemn, but glorious; a thing to be conquered and made beautiful, to his eyes. He did not understand what they meant by their faltering and their fears.

"I feel, on the whole, disposed to accept Sir Thomas's offer," said the young prince. "It is no favor, for I am quite able to be his boy's tutor, as he says; and I see nothing particularly serious in it either," the young man went on; "most Scotch students stop short sometime and have a spell of teaching. I have been tutor at Ardmartin; I don't mind being tutor at Wodensbourne. I would not be dependent on Sir Thomas Frankland or any man," said Colin; "but I am glad to labor for myself, and free you, father. I know

you have been willing to keep me at college; but you have plenty to do for Archie and the rest; and now it is my turn; I may help myself and them too," cried the youth, glad to disguise in that view of the matter the thrill of delight at his new prospects, which came from a very different source. "It will give us a little time, as you say, to think it all over," he continued, after a momentary pause, and turned upon his mother with a smile. "Is there anything to look melancholy about?" said Colin, turning back from his forehead the clouds of his brown hair.

"Oh, no, no, God forbid!" said the mistress, "nothing but hope and the blessing of God;" but she turned aside from the table, and began to put away some of the things by way of concealing the tears that welled up to her tender eyes, though neither she nor any one for her could have told why.

"Never mind your mother," said the farmer, "though it's out of the common to see a cloud on her face when there's no cloud to speak of on the sky. But women are aye having freits and fancies. I think it's the wisest thing ye can do to close with Sir Thomas's proposal, mysel'. I wouldna say but you'll see a good deal o' the world," said the farmer, shrewd but ignorant; "not that I'm so simple as to suppose that an English gentleman's country-seat will bring you to onything very extraordinary in the way of company; but still, that class of folk is wonderfully connected, and ye might see mair there in a season than you could here in a lifetime. It's time I were looking after Archie and the men," said big Colin; "it's no often I'm so late in the morning. I suppose you'll write to Sir Thomas yourself, and make a' the arrangements. Ye can say we're quite content, and pleased at his thoughtfulness. If that's no to your mind, Colin, I'm sorry for it; for a man should be aye man enough to give thanks when thanks are due." With this last admonition big Colin of Ramore took up his hat and went off to his fields. "I wish the callant didna keep a grudge," he said to himself, as he went upon his cheerful way. "If he were to set up in rivalry wi' young Frankland!" but with the thought a certain smile came upon the father's face. He, too, could not refrain from a certain contempt of the baronet's dainty son; and there was scarcely any limit to his pride and confidence in his boy.

The mistress occupied herself in putting things to rights in the parlor long after her husband had gone to the fields. She thought Lauderdale, too, wanted to be alone with Colin; and, with natural jealousy, could not permit the first word of counsel to come from any lips but her own. The mistress had no baby to occupy her in these days; the little one whom she had on her bosom at the opening of this history, who bore her own name and her own smile, and was the one maiden blossom of her life, had gone back to God who gave her; and, when her boys were at school, the gentle woman was alone. There was little doing in the dairy just then, and Mrs. Campbell had planned her occupations so as to have all the time that was possible to enjoy her son's society. So she had no special call upon her time this morning, and lingered over her little businesses, till Lauderdale, who would fain have said his say, strayed out in despair, finding no room for him. "When you've finished your letter, Colin, you'll find me on the hill," he said as he went out; and could not refrain from a murmur in his own mind at the troublesome cares of "thae women." "They're sweet to see about a house, and the place is hame where they are," said the philosopher to himself with a sigh; "but oh, such fykes as they ware their hearts on!" The mistress's "fykes," however, were over when the stranger left the house. She came softly to Colin's table, where he was writing, and sat down beside him. As for Colin, he was so much absorbed in his letter that he did not observe his mother; and it was only when he lifted his head to consider a sentence, and found her before him, that he woke up, with a little start, out of that more agreeable occupation, and asked, "Do you want me?" with a look of annoyance which went to the mistress's heart.

"Yes, Colin, I want you just for a moment," said his mother. "I want to speak to you of this new change in your life. Your father thinks nothing but it's Sir Thomas Frankland you're going to, to be tutor to his boy; but, oh, Colin, I ken better! It's no the fine house and the new life that lights such light in my laddie's eye. Colin, listen to me. She's far above you in this world, though it's no to be looked for that I could think ony woman was above you; but she's a lady with mony wooers, and you're but a poor man's son. Oh, Colin, my man! diuna

gang near that place, nor put yourself in the way of evil, if you havena some confidence either in her or yoursel'. Do you think you can see her day by day and no break your heart; or do you think she's worthy of a heart to be thrown away under her feet? Or, oh, my laddie! tell me this first of a',—do you think you could ask her, or she could consent, to lose fortune and grandeur for your sake? Colin, I'm no joking; it's awfu' earnest, whatever you may think. Tell me if you've ony regard for your mother, or wish her ony kind of comfort the time you're away?"

This Mrs. Campbell said with tears shining in her eyes, and a look of entreaty in her face, which Colin had hard ado to meet. But the lad was full of his own thoughts, and impatient of the interruption which detained him.

"I wish I knew what you meant," he said, pettishly. "I wish you would not talk of—people who have nothing to do with my poor little concerns. Surely, I may be suffered to engage in ordinary work like other people," said Colin. "As for the lady you speak"—

And here the youth paused, with a natural smile lurking at the corners of his lips,—a smile of youthful confidence and self-gratulation. Not for a kingdom would the young hero have boasted of any look or word that had inspired him; but he would not deny himself the delicious consciousness that she must have had something to do with this p[illegible]al—that it must have been her sugge[illegible]ion, or at least supported, seconded by her. Only through her intimation could her uncle have known that he was tutor at Ardmartin, and the thought that it was she herself who was taking what maidenly means she could for their speedy reunion was too sweet to Colin's heart to be breathed in words, even if he could have done it without a betrayal of his hopes.

"Ay, Colin, the lady," said his mother; "you say no more in words, but your eye smiles and your mouth, and I see the flush on your cheek. She's bonnie and sweet and fair-spoken, and I canna think she means ony harm; but, oh, Colin, my man, mind what a difference in this world! You've nothing to offer her like what she's been used to," said the innocent woman, "and if I was to see my son come back breaking his heart for one that was above his reach, and that mightna be worthy"—said the mistress, with her eyes full of tears. She could not say any more, partly because she had exhausted herself, partly because Colin rose from the table with a flush of excitement, which made his mother tremble.

"Worthy of me!" said the young man, with a kind of groan, "worthy of me! Mother, I don't think you know what you are saying. I am going to Wodensbourne, whatever happens. It may be for good or for evil; I can't tell; but I am going, and you must ask me no further questions,—not on this point. I am to be tutor to Sir Thomas Frankland's boy," said Colin, coming back with the smile in his eyes. "Nothing more—and what could happen better to a poor Scotch student? He might have had a Cambridge man, and he chooses me. Let me finish my letter, mother, dear."

"He wouldna get many Cambridge men, or ony other men, like my boy," said the mother, half reassured; and she rearranged with her hands, that trembled a little, the writing-desk, which Colin's hasty movements had thrust out of the way.

"Ah, mother, but a Scotch university does not count for the same as an English one," said Colin, with a smile and a sigh; "it is not for my gifts Sir Thomas has chosen me," he added, a little impatiently taking up his pen again. What was it for? That old obligation of Harry Frankland's life saved, which Colin had always treated as a fiction? or the sweet influence of some one who knew that Colin loved her? Which was it? If the youth determined it should be the last, could anybody wonder? He bent his head again over his paper, and wrote, with his heart beating high, that acceptance which was to restore him to her society. As for the mistress, she left her son, and went about her homely business, wiping some tears from her eyes. "I kenna what woman could close her heart," she said to herself, with a little sob, in her ignorance and innocence. "Oh, if she's only worthy!" but, for all that, the mother's heart was heavy within her, though she could not have told why.

The letter was finished and sealed up before Colin joined his friend on the hillside, where Lauderdale was straying about with his hands in his pockets, breathing long sighs into the fresh air, and unable to restrain, or account

for, his own restlessness and uneasiness. One of those great dramas of sunshine and shadow, which were familiar to the Holy Loch, was going on just then among the hills, and the philosopher had made various attempts to interest himself in those wonderful alternations of gloom and light, but without avail. Nature, which is so full of interest when the heart is unoccupied, dwindles and grows pale in presence of the poorest human creature who throws a shadow into her sunshine. Not all those wonderful gleams of light—not all those clouds, driven wildly like so many gigantic phantoms into the solemn hollows, could touch the heart of the man who was trembling for his friend. Lauderdale roused himself up when Colin came to him, and met him cheerfully. "So you've written your letter?" he said, "and accepted the new turn in your fortune? I thought as much by your eye."

"You did not need to consult my eye," said Colin, gayly. "I said as much. But I must walk down to the loch a mile or two to meet the postman. Will you come? Let us take the good of the hills," said the youth, with his heart running over. "Who can tell when we may be here again together? I like this autumn weather, with its stormy colors; and I suppose now my fortune, as you call it, will lead me to a flat country—that is, for a year or two at least."

"Ay," said Lauderdale, with a kind of groan, "that is how the world appears at your years. Who can tell when we may be here again together? Who can tell, laddie, what thoughts may be in our hearts when we *are* here again? I never have any security myself, when I leave a place, that I'll ever dare to come back," said the meditative man. "The innocent fields might have a cruel aspect, as if God had cursed them, and, for anything I know, I might hate the flowers that could bloom, and the sun that could shine, and had no heart for my trouble. No that you understand what I'm meaning, but that's the way it affects a man like me."

"What are you thinking of?" cried Colin, with a little dismay. "One would fancy you saw some terrible evil approaching. Of course the future is uncertain, but I am not particularly alarmed by anything that appears to me. What are you thinking of, Lauderdale? Your own career?"

"Oh, ay, just my ain career," said Lauderdale, with a smile; "such a career to make a work about! though I am just as content as most men. I mind when my ain spirit was whiles uplifted as yours is, laddie; it's *that* that makes a man think. It comes natural to the time of life, like the bright eye and the bloom on the cheek," said Colin's friend; "and there's no sentence of death in it either, if you come to that," he went on to himself after a pause. "Life holds on—it aye holds on—a hope mair or less makes little count. And without the agony and the struggle, never man that was worth calling man came to his full stature." All this Lauderdale kept saying to himself as he descended the hillside, leaping here and there over a half-concealed streamlet, and making his way through the withered ferns and the long, tangled streamers of the bramble, which caught at him as he passed. He was not so skilful in overcoming these obstacles as Colin, who was to the manner born; and he got a little out of breath as he followed the lad, who, catching his monologue by intervals in the descent, looked at the melancholy philosopher with his young eyes, which laughed, and did not understand.

"I wonder what you are thinking of," said Colin. "Not of me, certainly; but I see you are afraid of something, as if I were going to encounter a great danger. Lauderdale," said the lad stopping and laying his head on his friend's arm for one confidential moment, "whatever danger there is, I *have* encountered it. Don't be afraid for me."

"I was saying nothing about you, callant," said Lauderdale, pettishly. "Why should I aye be thinking of you? A man has more things to consider in this life than the vagaries of a slip of a laddie, that doesna see where he's bound for. I'm thinking of things far out of your way," said the philosopher; "of disappointments and heart-breaks, and a' the eclipses that are invisible to common e'en. I've seen many in my day. I've seen a trifling change that made no difference to the world quench a' the light and a' the comfort out of life. There's more things in heaven or earth than were ever dreamed of at your years. And whiles a man wonders how, for very pity, God can stay still in his heavens and look on"—

Colin could not say anything to the groan with which his friend broke off. He was troubled and puzzled, and could not make it out. They went on together along the white

line of road, on which, far off in the distance, the youth already saw the postman whom he was hastening to meet; and, busy as he was with his own thoughts, Colin had already forgotten to inquire what his companion referred to, when his attention, which had wandered completely away from this perplexing tale, was suddenly recalled again by the voice at his side.

"I'm speaking like a man that cannot see the end," said Lauderdale, "which is clear to Him if there's any meaning in life. You're for taking your chance and posting your letter, laddie? and you ken nothing about any nonsense that an old fool like me may be maundering? For one thing there's aye plenty to divert the mind in this country," said the philosopher, with a sigh, and stood still at the foot of the long slope they had just descended, looking with a wistful, abstract look upon the loch and the hills; at which change of mood Colin could not restrain himself, but with ready boyish mirth laughed aloud.

"What has this country to do with it all? You are in a very queer mood to-day, Lauderdale,—one moment as solemn and mysterious as if you knew of some great calamity, and the next talking of the country. What do you mean, I wonder?" said the lad. His wonder was not very deep, but stirred lightly in the heart which was full of so many wishes and ambitions of its own. With that letter in his hand, and that new life before him, how could he help but look at the lonely man by his side with a half-divine compassion?—a man to whom life offered no prizes, and scarcely any hopes. He was aware in his heart that Lauderdale was anxious about himself, and the thought of that unnecessary solicitude moved Colin half to laughter. Poor Lauderdale,—upon whom he looked down from the elevation of his young life with the tenderest pity. He smiled upon his friend in his exaltation and superiority. "You are more inexplicable than usual to-day. I wonder what you mean?" said Colin with all the sunshine of youth and joy, defying evil forebodings, in his eyes.

"It would take a wise man to tell," said Lauderdale; "I would not pretend, for my own part, to fathom what any fool might mean—much less what I mean myself, that have glimmerings of sense at times. Yon sunshine's awfu' prying about the hills. Light's aye inquisitive, and would fain be at the bottom of every mystery, which is, maybe, the reason," said the speculative observer, "why there's nae grandeur to speak of, nor meaning, according to mortal notions, without clouds and darkness. Yonder's your postman, callant. Give him the letter and be done with it. I whiles find myself wondering how it is that we take so little thought to God's meanings,—what ye might call his lighter meanings,—his easy verses and such-like, that are thrown about the world, in the winds and the sky. To be sure, I ken just as well as you do that it's currents of air, and masses of vapor and electricity, and all the rest of it. It's awfu' easy learning the words, but will you tell me there's no meaning to a man's heart and soul in the like of that?" said Colin's companion stopping suddenly with a sigh of impatience and vexation, which had to do with something more vital than the clouds. Just then, nature truly seemed to have come to a pause, and to be standing still, like themselves, looking on. The sky that was so blue and broad a moment since had contracted to a black vault over the Holy Loch. Blackness that was positive and not a mere negative frowned out of all the half-disclosed mysterious hollows of the hills. The leaves that remained on the trees thrilled with a spasmodic shiver, and the little ripples came crowding up on the beach with a sighing suppressed moan of suspense and apprehension. So, at least, it seemed to one if not both of the spectators standing by.

"It means a thunder-storm, in the first place," said Colin; "look how it begins to come down in a torrent of gloom over Loch Goil. We have just time to get under shelter. It is very well for us we are so near Ramore."

"Ay"— said Lauderdale. He repeated the syllable over again and again as they hurried back. "But the time will come when we'll no be near Ramore," he said to himself as the storm reached him and dashed in his face not twenty yards from the open door. Colin's laugh, as he reached with a bound the kindly portal, was all the answer which youth and hope gave to experience. The boy was not to be discouraged on that sweet threshold of his life.

CHAPTER XIV.

WODENSBOURNE was as different from any house that Colin had ever seen before as the low, flat country, rich and damp and monotonous, was unlike the infinitely varied landscape to which his eye had been accustomed all his life. The florid upholstery of Ardmartin contrasted almost strangely with the sober magnificence of the old family house in which the Franklands had lived and died for generations, as did the simple little rooms to which Colin had been accustomed in his father's house. Perhaps, on the whole, Ramore, where everything was for use and nothing for show, was less unharmonious with all he saw about him than the equipments of the brand-new castle, all built out of new money, and gilded and lackered to a climax of domestic finery. Colin's pupil was the invalid of the family,—a boy of twelve, who could not go to Eton like his brothers, but whom the good-natured baronet thought, as was natural, the cleverest of his family. "That's why I wanted you so much, Campbell," Sir Thomas said, by way of setting Colin at ease in his new occupation; "he's not a boy to be kept to classics, isn't Charley—there's nothing that boy wouldn't master—and shut up, as he has to be, with his wretched health, he wants a little variety. I've always heard you took a wider range in Scotland; that's what I want for my boy." It was with this that the new tutor was introduced to his duties at Wodensbourne. But a terrible disappointment awaited the young man,—a disappointment utterly unforeseen. There was nobody there but Sir Thomas himself and Charley and some little ones still in the nursery. "We're all by ourselves; but you wont mind," said the baronet, who seemed to think it all the better for Colin; "my lady and Miss Matty will be home before Christmas, and you can get yourself settled comfortably in the mean time. Lady Frankland is with her sister, who is in very bad health. I don't know what people mean by getting into bad health—women, too, that can't go in for free living and that sort of thing," said Sir Thomas. "The place looks dreary without the ladies; but they'll be back before Christmas;" and he went to sleep after dinner as usual, and left the young tutor at the other side of the table sitting in a kind of stupefied amazement and mortification in the silence, wondering what he came here for, and where his hopes and brilliant anguries had gone to. Perhaps Colin did not know what he himself meant when he accepted Sir Thomas Frankland's proposal. He thought he was coming to live in Matty's society; to be her companion; to walk with her and talk with her, as he had done at Ardmartin; but, when he arrived to find Wodensbourne deserted, with nothing to be seen but Sir Thomas and a nursery governess, who sometimes emerged with her little pupils from the unknown regions up-stairs, and was very civil to the new tutor, Colin's disappointment was overwhelming. He despised himself with a bitterness only to be equalled by the brilliancy of those vain expectations over which he laughed in youthful rage and scorn. It was not to be Matty's companion he had come; it was not to see, however far off, any portion of the great world which he could not help imagining sometimes must be visible from such an elevation. It was only to train Charley's precocious intellect, and amuse the baronet a little at dinner. After dinner, Sir Thomas went to sleep, and even Charley was out of the way, and the short, winter days closed down early over the great house, on the damp woods and silent park, which kept repeating themselves, day by day, upon Colin's wearied brain. There was not even an undulation within sight, nothing higher than the dull line of trees, which after a while it made him sick to look at. To be sure, the sunshine now and then caught upon the lofty lantern of Earie Cathedral, and by that means woke up a gleam of light on the flat country; but that, and the daily conflict with Charley's sharp invalid understanding, and the sight of Sir Thomas sleeping after dinner, conveyed no exhilaration to speak of to lighten the dismal revulsion of poor Colin's thoughts. His heart rose indignant sometimes, which did him more good. This was the gulf of dismay he tumbled into without defence or preparation after the burst of hope and foolish youthful delight with which he left Ramore.

As for the society at Wodensbourne, it was at the present moment of the most limited description. Colin, who was inexperienced, roused up out of his dulness a little when he heard that two of the canons of Earie were coming to dinner one evening. The innocent Scotch lad woke himself up, with a little curiosity about the clerical dignitaries, of whom he knew nothing, and a good deal of anxiety to comport himself as became the representa-

tive of a Scotch university, about whom he did not doubt the visitors would be a little curious. It struck Colin with the oddest surprise and disappointment, to find that the canons of Earie were perfectly indifferent about the Scotch student. The curate of the parish, indeed, who was also dining at Wodensbourne that day, was wonderfully civil to the new tutor. He told him that he understood the Scotch mountains were very near as fine as Switzerland, and that he hoped to see them some day, though the curious prejudices about Sunday and the whiskey-drinking must come very much in the way of closer intercourse; at which speech Colin's indignation and amusement would have been wonderful to see, had any one been there who cared to notice how the lad was looking. On the Sundays, Colin and his pupil went along the level ways to the quaint old mossy church, to which this same curate was devoting all his time and thoughts by way of restoration. The Scotch youth had never seen anything at once so homely and so noble as this little church in the fen-country. He thought it nothing less than a poem in stone, a pathetic old psalm of human life and death, uttering itself for ever and ever, in the tenderest, sad responses, to the worship of heaven. Never anywhere had he felt so clearly how the dead were waiting for the great Easter to come, nor seen Christianity standing so plainly between the two comings; but when Colin, with his Scotch ideas, heard the curious little sermons to which his curate gave utterance under that roof, all consecrated and holy with the sorrows and hopes of ages, it made the strangest anti-climax in the youth's thoughts. He laughed to himself when he came out, not because he was disposed to laughter, but because it was the only alternative he had; and Sir Thomas, who had a glimmering perception that this must be something new to his inexperienced guest, gave a doubtful sort of smile, not knowing how to take Colin's strange looks.

"You don't believe in saints' days, and such-like, in Scotland?" said the perplexed baronet; "and of course the sermon does not count for so much with us."

"No," said Colin; and they did not enter further into the subject.

As for the young man himself, who had still upon his mind the feeling that he was to be a Scotch minister, the lesson was the strangest possible; for, being Scotch, he could not help listening to the sermon according to the usage of his nation. The curate, after he had said those passages which are all but divine in their comprehension of the wants of humanity, told his people how wonderfully their beloved Church had provided for all their wants; how sweet it was to recollect that this was the day which had been appointed the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity, and how it was their duty to meditate a fact so touching and so important. Colin thought of the Holy Loch, and the minister's critics there, and laughed to himself, perhaps a little bitterly. He felt as if he had given up his own career, —the natural life to which he was born,—and at this distance the usual enchantments of nature began to work, and in his heart he asked himself what he was to gain by transferring his heart and hopes to this wealthier country, where so many things were fairer, and after which he had been hankering so long. The curate's sermons struck him as a kind of comical climax to his disappointments, —the curate who looked at himself much as he might have looked at a South-Sea Islander, and spoke of the Scotch whiskey and Scotch Sabbaths. Poor curate! He knew a great deal more than Colin did about some things, and if he did not understand how to preach, that was not the fault of his college; neither did they convey much information at that seat of learning about the northern half of the British island—no more than they did at Glasgow about the curious specimen of humanity which is known as a curate on the brighter side of the Tweed.

All these things went through Colin's mind as he sat in the dining-room after dinner, contemplating Sir Thomas's nap, which was not of itself an elevating spectacle. He thought to himself at that moment that he was but fulfilling the office of a drudge at Wodensbourne, which anybody could fill. It did not require those abilities which had won with acclamation the prize in the philosophy class to teach Charley Frankland the elements of science; and all the emulations and glories of his college career came back to Colin's mind. The little public of the university had begun to think of him; to predict what he would do, and anticipate his success at home; but here, who knew anything about him? All these thoughts came to rapid conclusions as the young man sat watching the

fire gleam in the wainscot, and calculating the recurrence of that next great snore which would wake Sir Thomas, and make him sit up of a sudden and look fiercely at his companion before he murmured out a "Beg your pardon," and went to sleep again. Not an interesting prospect certainly. Should he go home? Should he represent to the baronet, when he woke up for the night, that it had all been a mistake, and that his present office was perfectly unsuited to his ambition and his hopes? But then what could he say? for after all, it was as Charley Frankland's tutor simply, and with his eyes open, that he came to Wodensbourne, and Sir Thomas had said nothing about the society of his niece, or any other society, to tempt him thither. Colin sat in a bitterness of discontent, which would have been incredible to him a few weeks before, pondering these questions. There was not a sound to be heard, but the dropping of the ashes on the hearth, and Sir Thomas's heavy breathing as he slept. Life went on velvet slippers in the great house from which Colin would gladly have escaped (he thought) to the poorest cottage on the Holy Loch. He could not help recalling his shabby little room in Glasgow, and Lauderdale's long comments upon life, and all the talk and the thoughts that made existence bright in that miserable little place, which Sir Thomas Frankland's grooms would not have condescended to live in, but which the unfortunate young tutor thought of with longings as he sat dreary in the great dining-room. What did it matter to him that the floor was soft with Turkey carpets, that the wine on the table was of the most renowned vintages, and that his slumbering companion in the great easy-chair was the head of one of the oldest commoner families in England,—a baronet and a county member? Colin, after all, was only a son of the soil; he longed for his Glasgow attic, and his companions who spoke the dialect of that remarkable but unlovely city, and felt bitterly in his heart that he had been cheated. Yet it was hard to say to any one—hard even to put in words to himself—what the cheat was. It was a deception he had practised on himself, and in the bitterness of his disappointment the youth refused to say to himself that anybody's absence was the secret of his mortification. What was she to him? —a great lady as far out of his reach as the moon or the stars, and who no doubt had forgotten his very name.

These were not pleasant thoughts to season the solitude; and he sat hugging them for a great many evenings before Sir Thomas awoke, and addressed, as he generally did, a few good-humored, stupid observations to the lad whom, to be sure, the baronet found a considerable bore, and did not know what to do with. Sir Thomas could not forget his obligations to the young man who saved Harry's life; and thus it was, from pure gratitude, that he made Colin miserable,—though there was no gratitude at all, nor even much respect, in the summary judgment which the youth formed of the heavy squire. This was how matters were going on when Wodensbourne and the world, and everything human, suddenly, all at once, sustained again a change to Colin. He had been thus, for six weary weeks,—during which time he felt himself getting morose, ill-tempered, and miserable, writing sharp letters home, in which he would not confess to any special disappointment, but expressed himself in general terms of bitterness like a young misanthrope, and in every respect making himself and those who cared for him unhappy. Even the verses, which did very well to express the tender griefs of sentiment, had been thrown aside at this crisis; for there was nothing melodious in his feelings, and he could not say in sweet rhymes and musical cadences how angry and wretched he was. He was sitting so one dreary December evening when it was raining fast outside and everything was silent within—as was natural in a well-regulated household where the servants knew their duty, and the nursery was half a mile away through worlds of complicated passages. Sir Thomas was asleep as usual, and, with his eyes shut and his mouth open, the excellent baronet was not, as we have already said, an elevating spectacle; and at the other end of the table, sat Colin, chafing out his young soul with such thoughts of what was not, but might have been, as youth does not know how to avoid. It was just then, when he was going over his long succession of miseries—and thinking of his natural career cut short for this dreary penance of which nothing could ever come—that Colin was startled by the sound of wheels coming up the wintry avenue. He could not venture to imagine

to himself what it might be, though he listened as if for life and death, and heard the sounds of an arrival and the indistinct hum of voices which he could not distinguish, without feeling that he had any right to stir from the table to inquire what it meant; and there he sat accordingly, with his hair thrust back from his forehead and his great eyes gleaming out from the noiseless atmosphere, when the door opened and a pretty figure, all eager and glowing with life, looked into the room. Colin was too much absorbed, too anxious, and felt too deeply how much was involved for himself to be capable even of rising up to greet her as an indifferent man would have done. He sat and gazed at her as she darted in like a fairy creature, bringing every kind of radiance in her train. "Here they are, aunty!" cried Miss Matty; and she came in flying in her cloak, with the hood still over her head and great rain-drops on it, which she had caught as she jumped out of the carriage. While Colin sat gazing at her, wondering if it were some deluding apparition, or, in reality, the new revelation of life and love that it seemed to be, Matty had thrown herself upon Sir Thomas and woke the worthy baronet by kissing him, which was a pretty sight to behold. "Here we are, uncle; wake up!" cried Matty; "my lady ran to the nursery first, but I came to you, as I always do." And the little witch looked up with a gleam at Colin, under which heaven and earth changed to the lad. He stumbled to his feet, while Sir Thomas rubbed his astonished eyes. What could Colin say? He stood waiting for a word, seeing the little figure in a halo of light and fanciful glory.

"How do you do? I knew you were here," said Miss Matty, putting out two fingers to him while she still hung over her uncle. And presently Lady Frankland came in, and the room became full of pleasant din and commotion, as was inevitable. When Colin made a move as if to leave them, fearful of being in the way, as the sensitive lad naturally was, Miss Matty called to him, "Oh, don't go, please; we are going to have tea, and my lady must be served without giving her any trouble, and I want you to help me," said Matty; and so the evening that had begun in gloom ended in a kind of subdued glory too sweet to be real. Lady Frankland sat talking to her husband of their reason for coming back so suddenly (which was sad enough, being an unexpected death in the house: but that did not make much difference to the two women who were coming home); Matty kept coming and going between the tea-table and the fire, sending Colin on all sorts of errands, and making comments to him aside on what her aunt was saying.

"Only fancy the long, dreary drive we have had, and my uncle and Mr. Campbell making themselves so cosy," the little siren said, kneeling down before the fire with still one drop of rain sparkling on her bright locks. And the effect was such that Colin lost himself altogether, and could not have affirmed, had he been questioned on his oath, that he had not enjoyed himself greatly all the evening. He took Lady Frankland her tea, and listened to all the domestic chatter as if it had been the talk of angels; and was as pleased, when the mistress of the house thanked him for his kindness to Charley, as if he had not thought Charley a wretched little nuisance a few hours ago. He did not in the least know who the people were about whom the two ladies kept up such an unceasing talk, and, perhaps, under other circumstances would have laughed at this sweet-coined gossip, with all its lively comments upon nothing and incessant personalities; but, at the present moment, Colin had said good-by to reason, and could not anyhow defend himself against the sudden happiness which seized upon him without any notice. While Sir Thomas and his wife sat on either side of the great fire, and Matty kept darting in and out between them, Colin sat behind near the impromptu tea-table, and listened and felt that the world was changed. If he could have had time to think, he might have been ashamed of himself, but then he had no time to think, and in the mean time he was happy, a sensation not to be gainsaid or rejected; and so fled the few blessed hours of the first evening of Matty's return.

When he had gone up-stairs, and had heard at a distance the sound of the last good-night, and was fairly shut up again in the silence of his own room, the youth, for the first time, began to realize what he was doing. He paused, with a little consternation, a little fright, to question himself. For the first time, he saw clearly, without any possibility of self-delusion, what it was which had brought him here, and which made all the

difference to him between happiness and misery. It was hard to realize now the state of mind he had been in a few hours before; but he did it, by dint of a great exertion, and saw, with a distinctness which alarmed him, how it was that everything had altered in his eyes. It was Matty's presence that made all the difference between this subdued thrill of happiness and that blank of impatient and mortified misery. The young man tried to stand still and consider the reality of his position. He had stopped in his career, arrested himself in his life; entered upon a species of existence which he felt in his heart was not more, but less, noble (for him) than his previous course. And what was it for? All for the uncertain smile, for the society—which might fail him any time—of a woman so far out of his way, so utterly removed from his reach, as Matilda Frankland? For a moment, the youth was dismayed, and stopped short, Wisdom and Truth whispering in his ear. Love might be fair, but he knew enough to know that life must not be subservient to that witchery; and Colin's good angel spoke to him in the silence, and bade him flee. Better to go back, and at once, to the gray and sombre world, where all his duties awaited him, than to stay here in this fool's paradise. As he thought so, he got up, and began to pace about his room, as though it had been a cage. Best to flee; it might hide all the light out of his life and break his heart; but what else had he to look for sooner or later? He sat up half the night, still pacing about his room, hesitating upon his fate, while the December storm raged outside. What was he to do? When he dropped to sleep at last, his heart betrayed him, and strayed away into celestial worlds of dreaming. He woke, still undecided, as he thought, to see the earliest wintry gleam of sunshine stealing in through his shutters. What was he to do? But already the daylight made him feel his terrors as so many shadows. His heart was a traitor, and he was glad to find it so, and the moment of indecision settled more surely than ever the bondage in which he seemed to have entangled his life.

CHAPTER XV.

From that day life flew upon celestial wings for Charley Frankland's tutor. It was not that any love-making proved possible, or that existence at Wodensbourne became at all what it had been at Ardmartin. The difference was in the atmosphere, which was now bright with all kinds of gladsome charms, and pervaded by anticipations—a charm which, at Colin's age, was more than reality. He never knew what moment of delight might come to him any day—what words might be said, or smiles shed upon him. Such an enchantment could not, indeed, have lasted very long, but, in the mean time, was infinitely sweet, and made his life like a romance to the young man. There was nobody at Wodensbourne to occupy Miss Matty, or withdraw her attention from her young worshipper; and Colin, with his poetic temperament and his youthful genius, and all the simplicities and inexperience which rendered him so different from the other clever young men who had been seen or heard of in that region, was very delightful company, even when he was not engaged in any acts of worship. Lady Frankland herself acknowledged that Mr. Campbell was a great acquisition. "He is not the least like other people," said the lady of the house; "but you must take care not to let him fall in love with you, Matty;" and both the ladies laughed softly as they sat over their cups of tea. As for Matty, when she went to dress for dinner, after that admonition, she put on tartan ribbons over her white dress, partly, to be sure, because they were in the fashion; but chiefly to please Colin, who knew rather less about tartan than she did, and had not the remotest idea that the many-colored sash had any reference to himself.

"I love Scotland," the little witch said to him when he came into the drawing-room, to which he was now admitted during Sir Thomas's nap,—and, to tell the truth, Lady Frankland herself had just closed her eyes in a gentle doze, in her easy-chair,—"but, though you are a Scotchman, you don't take the least notice of my ribbons; I am very fond of Scotland," said Matty. "and the Scotch," the wicked little girl added, with a glance at him, which made Colin's heart leap in his deluded breast.

"Then I am very glad to be Scotch," said the youth, and stooped down over the end of the sash till Matty thought he meant to kiss it, which was a more decided act of homage than it would be expedient, under the circumstances, to permit.

"Don't talk like everybody else," said Miss Matty; "that does not make any difference; you were always glad to be Scotch. I know you all think you are so much better and cleverer than we are in England. But, tell me, do you still mean to be a Scotch minister? I wish you would not," said Matty, with a little pout. And then Colin laughed, half with pleasure at what he thought her interest in him, and half with a sense of the ludicrous which he could not restrain.

"I don't think I could preach about the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity," he said with a smile; which was a speech Miss Matty did not understand.

"People here don't preach as you do in Scotland," said the English girl, with a little offence. "You are always preaching, and that is what renders it so dull. But what is the good of being a minister? There are plenty of dull people to be ministers; you are so clever"—

"Am I clever?" said Colin. "I am Charley's tutor; it does not require a great deal of genius—" but while he spoke, the eyes—which Matty did not comprehend, which always went leagues further than one could see—kindled up a little. He looked a long way past her, and no doubt he saw something; but it piqued her a little not to be able to follow him, nor to search out what he meant.

"If you had done what I wished, and gone to Oxford, Campbell," said Sir Thomas, whose repose had been interrupted earlier than usual; "I can't say much about what I could have done myself, for I have heaps of boys of my own to provide for; but, if you're bent on going into the Church, something would certainly have turned up for you. I don't say there's much of a course in the Church for an ambitious young fellow, but still, if you do work well and have a few friends— As for your Scotch Church, I don't know very much about it," said the baronet, candidly. "I never knew any one who did. What a bore it used to be a dozen years ago, when there was all that row; and now, I suppose, you're all at sixes and sevens; aint you?" asked the ingenuous legislator. "I suppose whiskey and controversy go together somehow." Sir Thomas got himself perched into the corner of a sofa very comfortably, as he spoke, and took no notice of the lightning in Colin's eyes.

"Oh, uncle! don't!" said Miss Matty; "didn't you know that the Presbyterians are all going to give up and join the Church? and it's all to be the same both in England and Scotland? You need not laugh. I assure you I know quite well what I am saying," said the little beauty, with a look of dignity. "I have seen it in the papers—such funny papers!—with little paragraphs about accidents, and about people getting silver snuff-boxes!—but all the same, they say what I tell you. There's to be no Presbyterians and no precentors, and none of their wicked ways, coming into church with their hats on, and staring all round instead of saying their prayers; and all the ministers are to be made into clergymen,—priests and deacons, you know; and they are going to have bishops and proper service like other people. Mr. Campbell," said Matty, looking up at him with a little emphasis, to mark that, for once, she was calling him formally by his name, "knows it is quite true."

"Humph," said Sir Thomas. "I know better; I know how Campbell, there, looked the other day when he came out of church. I know the Scotch and their ways of thinking. Go and make the tea and don't talk of what you don't understand. But as for you, Campbell, if you have a mind for the university and to go in for the Church"—

But this was more than Colin, being twenty and a Scotchman, could bear.

"I *am* going in for the Church," said the lad, doing all he could to keep down the excitement at which Sir Thomas would have laughed; "but it did not in the least touch my heart the other day to know that it was the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity. Devotion is a great matter," said the young Scotchman. "I grant you have the advantage over us there; but it would not do in Scotland to preach about the Church's goodness, and what she had appointed for such or such a day. We preach very stupid sermons, I dare say; but at least we mean to teach somebody something—what God looks for at their hands, or what they may look for at his. It is more an occupation for a man," cried the young revolutionary, "than reading the sublimest of prayers. I am going in for the Church; but it is the Church of Scotland," said Colin. He drew himself up with a grand youthful dignity, which was much lost on Sir Thomas, who, for his part, looked at his new tutor

with eyes of sober wonderment, and did not understand what this emotion meant.

"There is no occasion for excitement," said the baronet; "nobody nowadays meddles with a man's convictions; indeed, Harry would say, it's a great thing to have any convictions. That is how the young men talk nowadays," said Sir Thomas; and he moved off the sofa again, and yawned, though not uncivilly. As for Miss Matty, she came stealing up when she had made the tea, with her cup in her hand.

"So you do mean to be a minister?" she said, in a half-whisper, with a deprecating look. Lady Frankland had roused up, like her husband, and the two were talking, and did not take any notice of Matty's proceedings with the harmless tutor. The young lady was quite free to play with her mouse a little, and entered upon the amusement with zest, as was natural. "You mean to shut yourself up in a square house, with five windows, like the poor gentleman who has such red hair, and never see anybody but the old women in the parish, and have your life made miserable every Sunday by that precentor."

"I hope I have a soul above precentors," said Colin, with a little laugh, which was unsteady still, however, with a little excitement; "and one might mend all that," he added a minute after, looking at her with a kind of wistful inquiry which he could not have put into words. What was it he meant to ask with his anxious eye? But he did not himself know.

"Oh, yes," said Matty, "I know what you would do: you would marry somebody who was musical, and get a little organ and teach the people better; I know exactly what you would do," said the young lady, with a piquant little touch of spite, and a look that startled Colin; and then she paused, and hung her head for a moment and blushed, or looked as if she blushed. "But you would not?" said Matty, softly, with a sidelong glance at her victim. "Don't marry anybody; no one is any good after that. I don't approve of marrying, for my part, especially for a priest. Priests should always be detached, you know, from the world."

"Why?" said Colin. He was quite content to go on talking on such a subject for any length of time. "As for marrying, it is only your rich squires and great people who can marry when they please; we who have to make our own way in the world"— said the young man, with a touch of grandeur, but was stopped by Miss Matty's sudden laughter.

"Oh, how simple you are! As if rich squires and great people, as you say, could marry when they pleased—as if any man could marry when he pleased!" cried Miss Matty, scornfully. "After all, we do count for something, we poor women; now and then, we can put even an eldest son out in his calculations. It is great fun too," said the young lady, and she laughed, and so did Colin, who could not help wondering what special case she might have in her eye, and listened with all the eagerness of a lover. "There is poor Harry," said Miss Matty under her breath, and stopped short and laughed to herself and sipped her tea, while Colin lent an anxious ear. But nothing further followed that soft laughter. Colin sat on thorns, gazing at her with a world of questions in his face; but the siren looked at him no more. Poor Harry! Harry's natural rival was sensible of a thrill of jealous curiosity mingled with anxiety. What had she done to Harry?—this witch who had beguiled Colin—or was it, not she who had done anything to him, but some other as pretty and as mischievous? Colin had no clew to the puzzle; but it gave him a new access of half-conscious enmity to the heir of Wodensbourne.

After that talk, there elapsed a few days during which Colin saw but little of Matty, who had visits to pay, and some solemn dinner-parties to attend in Lady Frankland's train. He had to spend the evenings by himself on these occasions after dining with Charley, who was not a very agreeable companion; and when this invalid went to his room, as he did early, the young tutor found himself desolate enough in the great house, where no human bond existed between him and the little community within its walls. He was not in a state of mind to take kindly to abstract study at that moment of his existence; for Colin had passed out of that unconscious stage in which he had been at Ardmartin. Then, however much he had wished to be out of temptation, he could not help himself, which was a wonderful consolation; but now he had come wilfully and knowingly into the danger, and had become aware of the fact and, far more distinctly than ever before, of the difference between

himself and the object of his thoughts. Though he found it very possible at times to comfort himself with the thought that this was a very ordinary interruption of a Scotch student's work, and noways represented the Armida's garden in which the knight lost both his vocation and his life, there were other moments and moods which were less easily manageable; and, on the whole, he wanted the stimulus of perpetual excitement to keep him from feeling the false position he was in, and the expediency of continuing here. Though the feeling haunted him all day, at night, in the drawing-room,—which was brightened and made sweet by the fair English matron who was kind to Colin, and the fairer maiden who was the centre of all his thoughts,—it vanished like an evil spirit, and left him with a sense that nowhere in the world could he have been so well; but when this mighty stimulus was withdrawn, the youth was left in a very woful plight, conscious, to the bottom of his heart, that he ought to be elsewhere, and here was consuming his strength and life. He strayed out in the darkness of the December nights through the gloomy silent park into the little village with its feeble lights, where everybody and everything was unknown to him; and all the time his demon sat on his shoulders and asked what he did there. While he strayed through the broken, irregular village street, to all appearance looking at the dim cottage-windows and listening to the rude songs from the little ale-house, the curate encountered the tutor. Most probably the young priest, who was not remarkable for wisdom, imagined the Scotch lad to be in some danger; for he laid a kindly hand upon his arm and turned him away from the vociferous little tavern, which was a vexation to the curate's soul.

"I should like you to go up to the Parsonage with me, if you will only wait till I have seen this sick woman," said the curate; and Colin went in very willingly within the cottage-porch to wait for his acquaintance, who had his prayer-book under his arm. The young Scotchman looked on with wondering eyes, while the village priest knelt down by his parishioner's bedside and opened his book. Naturally there was a comparison always going on in Colin's mind. He was like a passive experimentalist, seeing all kinds of trials made before his eyes, and watching the result.

"I wonder if they all think it is a spell," said Colin to himself; but he was rebuked and was silent when he heard the responses which the cottage folk made on their knees. When the curate had read his prayer, he got up and said good-night, and went back to Colin; and this visitation of the sick was a very strange experience to the young Scotch observer, who stood revolving everything, with an eye to Scotland, at the cottage-door.

"You don't make use of our Common Prayer in Scotland?" said the curate. "Pardon me for referring to it. One cannot help being sorry for people who shut themselves out from such an inestimable advantage. How did it come about?"

"I don't know," said Colin. "I suppose because Laud was a fool, and King Charles a "—

"Hush, for goodness' sake," said the curate, with a shiver. "What do you mean? Such language is painful to listen to. The saints and martyrs should be spoken of in a different tone. You think that was the reason? Oh, no; it was your horrible Calvinism and John Knox and the mad influences of that unfortunate Reformation which has done us all so much harm, though I suppose you think differently in Scotland," he said, with a little sigh, steering his young companion, of whose morality he felt uncertain, past the alehouse-door.

"Did you never hear of John Knox's liturgy?" said the indignant Colin; "the saddest, passionate service! You always had time to say your prayers in England, but we had to snatch them as we could. And your prayers would not do for us now," said the Scotch experimentalist; "I wish they could; but it would be impossible. A Scotch peasant would have thought *that* an incantation you were reading. When you go to see a sick man, shouldn't you like to say, God save him, God forgive him, straight out of your heart without a book?" said the eager lad; at which question the curate looked up with wonder in the young man's face.

"I hope I do say it out of my heart," said the English priest, and stopped short, with a gravity that had a great effect upon Colin; "but in words more sound than any words of mine," the curate added a moment after, which dispersed the reverential impression from the Scotch mind of the eager boy.

"I can't see that," said Colin, quickly,

"in the church for common prayer, yes; at a bedside in a cottage, no. At least, I mean that's how we feel in Scotland, though I suppose you don't care much for our opinion," he added, with some heat, thinking he saw a smile on his companion's face.

"Oh, yes, certainly; I have always understood that there is a great deal of intelligence in Scotland," said the curate, courteous as to a South-Sea Islander. "But people who have never known this inestimable advantage? I believe preaching is considered the great thing in the North?" he said, with a little curiosity. "I wish society were a little more impressed by it among ourselves; but mere *information* even about spiritual matters is of so much less importance! though that, I dare say, is another point on which we don't agree?" the curate continued, pleasantly. He was just opening the gate into his own garden, which was quite invisible in the darkness, but which enclosed and surrounded a homely house with some lights in the windows, which, it was a little comfort to Colin to perceive, was not much handsomer, nor more imposing in appearance than the familiar manse on the borders of the Holy Loch.

"It depends on what you call spiritual matters," said the polemical youth. "I don't think a man can possibly get too much information about his relations with God, if only anybody could tell him anything; but certainly about ecclesiastical arrangements and the Christian year," said the irreverent young Scotchman, "a little might suffice;" and Colin spoke with the slightest inflection of contempt, always thinking of the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity, and scorning what he did not understand, as was natural to his years.

"Ah, you don't know what you are saying," said the devout curate. "After you have spent a Christian year, you will see what comfort and beauty there is in it. You say, 'if anybody could tell him anything.' I hope you have not got into a sceptical way of thinking. I should like very much to have a long talk with you," said the village priest, who was very good and very much in earnest, though the earnestness was after a pattern different from anything known to Colin; and, before the youth perceived what was going to happen, he found himself in the curate's study, placed on a kind of moral platform, as the emblem of Doubt and that pious unbelief which is the favorite of modern theology. Now, to tell the truth, Colin, though it may lower him in the opinion of many readers of his history, was not by nature given to doubting. He had, to be sure, followed the fashion of the time enough to be aware of a wonderful amount of unsettled questions, and questions which it did not appear possible ever to settle. But somehow these elements of scepticism did not give him much trouble. His heart was full of natural piety, and his instincts all fresh and strong as a child's. He could not help believing, any more than he could help breathing, his nature being such; and he was half amused and half irritated by the position in which he found himself, notwithstanding the curate's respect for the ideal sceptic, whom he had thus pounced upon. The commonplace character of Colin's mind was such that he was very glad when his new friend relaxed into gossip, and asked him who was expected at the Hall for Christmas; to which the tutor answered by such names as he had heard in the ladies' talk, and remembered with friendliness or with jealousy, according to the feeling with which Miss Matty pronounced them—which was Colin's only guide amid this crowd of the unknown.

"I wonder if it is to be a match," said the curate, who, recovering from his dread concerning the possible habits of his Scotch guest, had taken heart to share his scholarly potations of beer with his new friend. "It was said Lady Frankland did not like it, but I never believed that. After all it was such a natural arrangement. I wonder if it is to be a match?"

"Is what to be a match?" said Colin, who all at once felt his heart stand still and grow cold, though he sat by the cheerful fire which threw its light even into the dark garden outside. "I have heard nothing about any match," he added, with a little effort. It dawned upon him instantly what it must be, and his impulse was to rush out of the house, or do anything rash and sudden that would prevent him from hearing it said in words.

"Between Henry Frankland and his cousin," said the calm curate; "they looked as if they were perfectly devoted to each other at one time. That has died off, for she is

rather a flirt, I fear; but all the people hereabouts had made up their minds on the subject. It would be a very suitable match on the whole. But why do you get up? You are not going away?"

"Yes; I have something to do when I go home," said Colin, "something to prepare," which he said out of habit, thinking of his old work at home, without remembering what he was saying, or whether it meant anything. The curate put down the poker which he had lifted to poke the fire, and looked at Colin with a touch of envy.

"Ah, something literary, I suppose?" said the young priest, and went with his new friend to the door, thinking how clever he was, and how lucky, at his age, to have a literary connection; a thought very natural to a young priest in a country curacy with a very small endowment. The curate wrote verses, as Colin himself did, though on very different subjects, and took some of them out of his desk, and looked at them, after he had shut the door, with affectionate eyes, and a half intention of asking the tutor what was the best way to get admission to the magazines, and on the whole he thought he liked what he had seen of the young Scotchman, though he was so ignorant of Church matters—an opinion which Colin perfectly reciprocated, with a more distinct sentiment of compassion for the English curate, who knew about as much of Scotland as if it had lair in the South Seas.

Meanwhile Colin walked home to Wodensbourne with fire and passion in his heart. "It would be a very suitable match on the whole," he kept saying to himself, and then tried to take a little comfort from Matty's sweet laughter over "Poor Harry!" Poor Harry was rich and fortunate and independent, and Colin was only the tutor. Were these two to meet this Christmas-time, and contend over again on this new ground? He went along past the black trees as if he were walking for a wager; but, quick as he walked, a dog-cart dashed past him with lighted lamp gleaming up the avenue. When he reached the hall-door, one of the servants was disappearing up-stairs with a portmanteau, and a heap of coats and wrappers lay in the hall.

"Mr. Harry just come, sir—a week sooner than was expected," said the butler, who was an old servant, and shared in the joys of the family. Colin went to his room without a word; shut himself up there with feelings which he would not have explained to any one. He had not seen Harry Frankland since they were both boys; but he had never got over the youthful sense of rivalry and opposition which had sent him skimming over the waters of the Holy Loch to save the boy who was his born rival and antagonist. Was this the day of their encounter and conflict which had come at last?

PART VI.—CHAPTER XVI.

HARRY FRANKLAND'S return made a great difference to the tutor, between whom and the heir of the house there existed that vague sense of jealousy and rivalship which was embittered on the part of young Frankland by certain consciousness of obligation. He was a good-natured fellow enough, and above the meanness of treating unkindly anybody who was in a dependent position; but the circumstances were awkward, and he did not know how to comport himself toward the stranger. "The fellow looks like a gentleman," he said privately in confidence to his mother; "if I had never seen him before, we might have got on, you know; but it's a horrible nuisance to feel that you're obliged to a fellow in that kind of position — neither your equal, you know, nor your inferior, nor— What on earth induced the governor to have him here? If it hadn't been for these cheap Scotch universities and stuff, he'd have been a ploughman that one could have given ten pounds to and been done with him. It's a confounded nuisance having him here."

"Hush, Harry," said Lady Frankland. "He is very nice and very gentlemanly, I think. He used to be very amusing before you came home. Papa, you know, is not entertaining after dinner; and really Mr. Campbell was quite an acquisition, especially to Matty, who can't live without a slave," said the lady of the house, with an indulgent, matronly smile.

"Oh, confound it, why did the governor have him here?" cried the discontented heir. "As for Matty, it appears to me she had better begin to think of doing without slaves," he said, moodily, with a cloud on his face; a speech which made his mother look up with a quick movement of anxiety, though she still smiled.

"I can't make out either you or Matty," said Lady Frankland. "I wish you would be either off or on. With such an appearance of indifference as you show to each other usually"—

"Oh, indifference, by Jove!" said Harry, breaking in upon his mother's words; and the young man gave a short whistle, and, jumping up abruptly, went off without waiting for any conclusion. Lady Frankland was not in the habit of disturbing herself about things in general. She looked after her son with a serious look, which, however, lasted but a moment. She returned immediately to her placidity and her needlework. "I dare say it will come all right," she said to herself, with serene philosophy, which perhaps accounted for the absence of wrinkles in her comely, middle-aged countenance. Harry, on the contrary, went off in anything but a serene state of mind. It was a foggy day, and the clouds lay very low and heavy over the fen-country, where there was nothing to relieve the dulness of nature. And it was afternoon,—the very time of the day when all hopes and attempts at cheering up are over —and dinner was still too far off to throw its genial glow upon the dusky house. There had been nothing going on for a day or two at Wodensbourne. Harry was before his time, and the expected guests had not yet arrived, and the weather was as troublesome and hindersome of every kind of recreation as weather could possibly be. Young Frankland went out in a little fit of impatience, and was met at the hall-door by a mouthful of dense white steaming air, through which even the jovial trees of holly, all glowing with Christmas berries, loomed like two prickly ghosts. He uttered an exclamation of disgust as he stood on the broad stone steps, not quite sure what to do with himself—whether to face the chill misery of the air outside, or to hunt up Matty and Charlie, and betake himself to the billiard-room within. But then the tutor—confound the fellow! Just at this moment Harry Frankland heard a laugh, a provoking little peal of silver bells. He had an odd sort of affection —half love, half dislike — for his cousin. But of all Matty's charms, there was none which so tantalized and bewitched him as this laugh, which was generally acknowledged to be charming. "Much there is to laugh about, by Jove!" he muttered to himself, with an angry flush; but he grew grimly furious when he heard her voice.

"You wont give in," said Matty, "the Scotch never will, I know; you are all so dreadfully argumentative and quarrelsome. But you are beaten, though you wont acknowledge it; you know you are. I like talking to you," continued the little witch, dropping her voice a little, "because—hush! I thought I heard some one calling me from the house."

"Because why?" said Colin. They were a good way off, behind one of those great

holly-trees; but young Frankland, with his quickened ears, discerned in an instant the softness, the tender admiration, the music of the tutor's voice. "By Jove!" said the heir to himself; and then he shouted out, "Matty, look here! come here!" in tones as different from those of Colin as discord is from harmony. It did not occur to him that Miss Matty's ear being perfectly cool and unexcited, was quite able to discriminate between the two voices which thus claimed her regard.

"What do you want?" said Matty. "Don't stand there in the fog like a ghost; if you have anything to say, come here. I am taking my constitutional; one's first duty is the care of one's health," said the wicked little creature, with her ring of laughter; and she turned back again under his very eyes along the terrace without looking at him again. As for Harry Frankland, the words which escaped from his excited lips were not adapted for publication. If he had been a little less angry, he would have joined them, and so made an end of the tutor; but, being furious, and not understanding anything about it, he burst for a moment into profane language, and then went off to the stables, where all the people had a bad time of it until the dressing-bell rang.

"What a savage he is!" said Matty, confidentially. "That is the bore of cousins; they can't bear to see one happy, and yet they wont take the trouble of making themselves agreeable. How nice it used to be down at Kilchurn *that* summer—you remember? And what quantities of poetry you used to write. I suppose Wodensbourne is not congenial to poetry? You have never shown me anything since you came here."

"Poetry is only for one's youth," said Colin; "that is, if you dignify my verses with the name,—for one's extreme youth, when one believes in everything that is impossible; and for Kilchurn and the Lady's Glen and the Holy Loch," said the youth, after a pause, with a fervor which disconcerted Matty. "*That* summer was not summer, but a bit of paradise—and life is real at Wodensbourne."

"I wish you would not speak in riddles," said Miss Matty, who was in the humor to have a little more of this inferred worship. "I should have thought life was a great deal more real at Ramore than here. Here we have luxuries and things—and—and—and books and"— She meant to have implied that the homely life was hard, and to have delicately intimated to Colin the advantage of living under the roof of Sir Thomas Frankland; but, catching his eye at the outset of her sentence, Matty had suddenly perceived her mistake, and broke down in a way most unusual to her. As she floundered, the young man looked at her with a full, unhesitating gaze, and an incomprehensible smile.

"Pardon me," he said; he had scarcely ever attempted before to take the superiority out of her hands, little trifler and fine lady as she was; he had been quite content to lay himself down in the dust and suffer her to march over him in airy triumph. But, while she was only a little trieksy coquette, taking from his imagination all her higher charms, Colin was a true man, a man full of young genius and faculties a world beyond anything known to Matty; and, when he was roused for the moment, it was so easy for him to confound her paltry pretensions. "Pardon me," he said, with the smile which piqued her, which she did not understand; "I think you mistake. At Ramore I was a poor farmer's son; but we had other things to think of than the difference between wealth and poverty. At Ramore we think nothing impossible; but here"—said Colin, looking round him with a mixture of contempt and admiration which Matty could not comprehend. "That, you perceive, was the age of poetry, the age of romance, the golden age," said the young man, with a smile. "The true knight required nothing but his sword, and was more than a match for all kinds of ugly kings and wicked enchanters; but Wodensbourne is prose, hard prose,—fine English, if you like, and much to be applauded for its style." The tutor ran on, delivering himself up to his fancy. "Not Miltonian, to be sure; more like Macaulay—fine, vigorous English, not destitute of appropriate ornament, but still prose, plain prose, Miss Frankland, —only prose!"

"It appears to me that you are cross, Mr. Campbell," said Matty, with a little spite for her young vassal showed signs of enfranchisement when he called her by her name. "You like your rainy loch better than anything else in the world; and you are sorry,"

said the syren, dropping her voice,—"you are even so unkind as to be sorry that you have come here?"

"Sometimes, yes," said Colin, suddenly clouding over. "It is true."

"*Sempre si*," said Matty; "though you cannot deny that we freed you from the delightful duty of listening to Sir Thomas after dinner," she went on, with a laugh. "Dear old uncle, why does he snore? So you are really sorry you came? I do so wish you would tell me why. Wodensbourne, at least, is better than Ardmartin," said Miss Matty, with a look of pique. She was rather relieved and yet horribly disappointed at the thought that Colin might perhaps be coming to his senses, in so far as she herself was concerned. It would save him a good deal of embarrassment, it was true; but she was intent upon preventing it all the same.

"I will tell you why I am sorry, if you will tell me why I ought to be glad," said Colin who was wise enough, for once, to see that he had the best of the argument.

"Oh, I don't know," said Matty; "if you don't see yourself—if you don't care about the advantages—if you don't mind living in the same—I mean, if you don't see the good."

"I don't see any good," said Colin, with suppressed passion, "except one which, if I stated it plainly, you would not permit me to claim. I see no advantages that I can venture to put in words. On the other hand, Wodensbourne has taught me a great deal. This fine, perspicuous English prose points an argument a great deal better than all the Highland rhymings in existence," said the young man, bitterly; "I'll give you a professional example, as I'm a tutor. At the Holy Loch we conjugate all our verbs affirmatively, interrogatively. Charley and I are getting them up in the negative form here, and it's hard work," said Charley's tutor. He broke off with a laugh which sounded strange and harsh, an unusual effect, in his companion's ear.

"Affirmatively? Interrogatively?" said Miss Matty, with a pretty puzzled look; "I hate long words. How do you suppose I can know what you mean? It is such a long time since I learnt my verbs—and then one always hated them so. Look here, what a lovely holly-leaf! *Il m'aime, il ne m'aime pas?*" said Miss Matty, pricking her fingers on the verdant spikes, and casting a glance at Colin. When their eyes met, they both laughed, and blushed a little in their several ways—that is to say, Miss Matty's swart complexion grew a little, a very little, brighter for one moment, or Colin at least thought it did, whereas the blood flushed all over his face, and went dancing back like so many streams of new life and joy to exhilarate his foolish youthful heart.

"By the by, I wonder if that foolish Harry came from my aunt; perhaps she wants me," said Miss Matty, who had gone as far as she meant to go. "Besides, the fog gets heavier; though, to be sure, I have seen it twenty times worse at Kilchurn. Perhaps it is the fog and the rain that makes it poetical there? I prefer reality, if that means a little sunshine, or even the fire in my lady's dressing-room," she cried, with a shiver. "Go indoors and write me some pretty verses: it is the only thing you can do after being such a savage. *Au revoir*—there are no half-partings in English, and it's so ridiculous to say good-by for an hour or two," said Miss Matty. She made him a little mock courtesy as she went away, to which, out of the fulness of her grace, the little witch added a smile and a pretty wave of her hand as she disappeared round the corner of the great holly, which were meant to leave Colin in a state of ecstasy. He stayed on the foggy terrace a long time after she had left him; but the young man's thoughts were not ecstatic. So long as she was present, so long as the strongest spell of natural magic occupied his eyes in watching and his ears in listening to her, he was still carried along and kept up by the witchery of young love. But in the intervals when her presence was withdrawn, matters grew to be rather serious with Colin. He was not like a love-sick girl, able to exist upon these occasional sweetnesses; he was a man, and required something more to satisfy his mind than the tantalizing enchantments and disappointments of this intercourse, which was fascinating enough in its way, but had no substance or reality in it. He had spoken truly; it had been entire romance, sweet as a morning dream at the Holy Loch. There the two young creatures, wandering by the glens and streams, were the ideal youth and maiden entering upon their natural inheritance of beauty and love and mutual admiration;

and at homely Ramore, where the world to which Matty belonged was utterly unknown, it was not difficult either for Colin himself, or for those around him, to believe that—with his endowments, his talents, and genius—he could do anything, or win any woman. Wodensbourne was a most sobering, disenchanting reality after this wonderful delusion. The Franklanks were all so kind to the young tutor, and their sense of obligation toward him made his position so much better than any other tutor's of his pretensions could have been, that the lesson came with all the more overwhelming force upon his awakening faculties. The morning and its dreams were gliding away,—or, at least, Colin thought so; and this clear daylight, which began to come in, dissipating all the magical effects of sunshine and mist and dew, had to be faced as he best could. He was not a young prince, independent of ordinary requirements; he was truly a poor man's son, and possessed by an ideal of life and labor such as has inspired many a young Scotchman. He wanted not only to get on in the world, to acquire an income and marry Matty, but also to be good for something in his generation. If the course of true love had been quite smooth with him, if Matty had been his natural mate, Colin could not have contented himself with that personal felicity. He was doubtful of all his surroundings, like most young men of his period,—doubtful what to do and how to do it,—more than doubtful of all the local ways and fashions of the profession to which he had been trained. But underneath this uncertainty lay something of which Colin had no doubt. He had not been brought into the world without an object; he did not mean to leave it without leaving some mark that he had been here. To get through life easily and secure as much pleasure as possible by the way was not the theory of existence known at Ramore. *There* it was understood to be a man's, a son's duty to better his position, to make his way upward in the world: and this philosophy of life had been enlarged and elevated in the poetic soul of Colin's mother. He had something to do in his own country, in his own generation. That was the master-idea of the young man's mind. How it was to be reconciled with this aimless, dependent life in the rich English household—with this rivalry, which could never come to anything, with Sir Thomas Frankland's heir—with this vain love, which, it began to be apparent to Colin, must, like the rivalry, end in nothing—it was hard to see. He remained on the terrace for about an hour, walking up and down in the fog. All that he could see before him were some indistinct outlines of trees, looking black through the steaming white air, and, behind, the great ghost of the house, with its long front and wings receding into the mist,—the great, wealthy, stranger house, to which he and his life had so little relationship. Many were the thoughts in Colin's mind during this hour; and they were far from satisfactory. Even the object of his love began to be clouded over with fogs, which looked very different, breathing over those low, rich, English levels, from the fairy mists of the Lady's Glen. He began to perceive dimly that his devotion was a toy and plaything to this little woman of the world. He began to perceive what an amount of love would be necessary to make such a creature as Matty place herself consciously by the side of such a lover as himself. Love!—and as yet all that he could say certainly of Matty was that she liked a little love-making, and had afforded him a great many facilities for that agreeable but unproductive occupation. Colin's heart lost itself in an uncertainty darker than the fog. His own position galled him profoundly. He was Charley's tutor. They were all very kind to him; but, supposing he were to ask the child of the house to descend from her eminence and be his wife—not even his wife, indeed, but his betrothed; to wait years and years for him until he should be able to claim her,—what would everybody think of him? Colin's heart beat against his breast in loud throbs of wounded love and pride. At Wodensbourne everything seemed impossible. He had not the heart to go away and end abruptly his first love and all his dreams, and how could he stay to consume his heart and his life? How go back to the old existence, which would now be so much harder? How begin anew and try another existence apart from all his training and traditions, for the sake of that wildest of incredible hopes? Colin had lived for some time in this state of struggle and argument with himself, and it was only Matty's presence which at times delivered him from it. Now, as before, he

took refuge in the thought that he could not immediately free himself: that, having accepted his position as Charley's tutor, he could not relinquish it immediately; that honor bound him to remain for the winter at least. When he had come, for the fiftieth time, to this conclusion, he went indoors, and up-stairs to his room. It was a good way up, but yet it was more luxurious than anything in Ramore, and on the table there were some flowers which she had given him the night before. Poor Colin! after his serious reflections he owed himself a little holiday. It was an odd enough conclusion, certainly, to his thoughts, but he had an hour to himself and his writing-desk was open on the table, and involuntarily he bethought himself of Miss Matty's parting words. The end of it was that he occupied his hour writing and rewriting and polishing into smooth couplets the pretty verses which that young lady had asked for. Colin's verses were as follows, from which it will be seen that, though he had a great deal of poetical sentiment, he was right in refusing to consider himself a poet:—

"In English speech, my lady said,
There are no sweet half-partings made—
Words half regret, half joy, that tell
We meet again and all is well.
Ah, not for sunny hours or days
Its grave 'Farewell' our England says;
Nor for a moment's absence, true,
Utters its prayer, 'God be with you.'
Other the thoughts that Love may reach,
In the grave tones of English speech;
Deeper than Fancy's passing breath,
The blessing stands for life or death.
If Heaven in wrath should rule it so,
If earth were capable of woe
So bitter as that this might be
The last dear word 'twixt thee and me,
Thus Love in English speech, above
All lighter thoughts, breathes, 'Farewell, Love;
For hours or ages if we part,
God be with thee, where'er thou art.
To no less hands than his alone
I trust thy soul out of my own.'
Thus speaks the Love that, grave and strong,
Can master death, neglect, and wrong,
Yet ne'er can learn, long as it lives,
To limit the full soul it gives,
Or cheat the parting of its pain
With light words 'Till we meet again.'
Ah, no, while on a moment's breath
Love holds the poise 'twixt lifeand death,
He cannot leave who loves thee, sweet,
With light postponement 'Till we meet;'
But rather prays, 'Whate'er may be
My life or death, God be with *thee!*
Though one brief hour my course may tell,
Ever and ever fare *thou* well.'"

Probably the readers of this history will think that Colin deserved his fate.

He gave them to her in the evening, when he found her alone in the drawing-room,—alone, at least, in so far that Lady Frankland was nodding over the newspaper, and taking no notice of Miss Matty's proceedings. "Oh, thank you! how nice of you!" cried the young lady; but she crumpled the little billet in her hand, and put it, not into her bosom as young ladies do in novels, but into her pocket, glancing at the door as she did so. "I do believe you are right in saying that there is nothing but prose here," said Matty. "I can't read it just now. It would only make them laugh, you know;" and she went away forthwith to the other end of the room, and began to occupy himself in arranging some music. She was thus employed when Harry came in, looking black enough. Colin was left to himself all that evening. He had, moreover, the gratification of witnessing all the privileges once accorded to himself given to his rival. Even in matters less urgent than love, it is disenchanting to see the same attentions lavished on another of which one has imagined one's self the only possessor. It was in vain that Colin attempted a grim smile to herself at this transference of Matty's wiles and witcheries. The lively table-talk—more lively than it could be with him, for the two knew all each other's friends and occupations; the little services about the tea-table which he himself had so often rendered to Matty, but which her cousin could render with a freedom impossible to Colin; the pleased, amused looks of the elders, who evidently imagined matters to be going on as they wished,—would have been enough of themselves to drive the unfortunate youth half wild as he sat in the background and witnessed it all. But, as Colin's evil genius would have it, the curate was that evening dining at Wodensbourne. And, in pursuance of his benevolent intention of cultivating and influencing the young Scotchman, this excellent ecclesiastic devoted himself to Colin. He asked a great many questions about Scotland and the Sabbath question, and the immoral habits of the peasantry, to which the catechumen replied with varying temper, sometimes giving wild answers, quite wide of the mark, as he applied

his jealous ear to hear rather the conversation going on at a little distance than the interrogatory addressed to himself. Most people have experienced something of the difficulty of keeping up an indifferent conversation while watching and straining to catch such scraps as may be audible of something more interesting going on close by; but the difficulty was aggravated in Colin's case by the fact that his own private interlocutor was doing everything in his power to exasperate him in a well-meaning and friendly way, and that the words which fell on his ear close at hand were scarcely less irritating than the half-heard words, the but too distinctly seen combinations at the other end of the room, where Matty was making tea, with her cousin hanging over her chair. After he had borne it as long as he could, Colin turned to bay.

"Scotland is not in the South Seas," said the young Scotchman; "a day's journey any time will take you there. As for our universities, they are not rich like yours; but they have been heard of from time to time," said Colin, with indignation. His eyes had caught fire from long provocation, and they were fixed at this moment upon Matty, who was showing her cousin something which she half drew out of her pocket under cover of her handkerchief. Was it his foolish offering that the two were about to laugh over? In the bitterness of the moment, he could have taken the most summary vengeance on the irreproachable young clergyman. "We don't tattoo ourselves nowadays, and no Englishman has eaten in my district within the memory of man," said the young savage, who looked quite inclined to swallow somebody, though it was doubtful who was the immediate object of his passion, which played in his brown eyes. Perhaps Colin had never been so much excited in his life.

"I beg your pardon," said the wondering curate. "I tell you, I fear "—and he followed Colin's eyes, after his first movement of offence was over, and perhaps comprehended the mystery; for the curate himself had been in his day the subject of experiments. "They seem to have come to a very good understanding, these two," he said, with a gentle clerical leaning toward inevitable gossip. "I told you how it was likely to be. I wish you would come to the vicarage oftener," continued the young priest. "If Frankland and you don't get on "—

"Why should not we get on?" said Colin, who was half mad with excitement,—he had just seen some paper, wonderfully like his own verses, handed from one to another of the pair who were so mutually engrossed,—and, if he could have tossed the curate or anybody else who might happen to be at hand out of window, it would have been a relief to his feelings. "He and I are in very different circumstances," said the young man, with his eyes aflame. "I am not aware that it is of the least importance to any one whether we get on or not. You forget that I am only the tutor." It occurred to him, as he spoke, how he had said the same words to Matty at Ardmartin, and how they had laughed together over his position. It was not any laughing matter now; and to see the two heads bending over that bit of paper was more than he could bear.

"I wish you would come oftener to the parsonage," said the benevolent curate. "I might be—we might be—of—of some use to each other. I am very much interested in your opinions. I wish I could bring you to see the beauty of all the Church's arrangements and the happiness of those "—

Here Colin rose to his feet without being aware of it, and the curate stopped speaking. He was a man of placid temper himself, and the young stranger's aspect alarmed him. Harry Frankland was coming forward with the bit of paper in his hand.

"Look here," said Frankland, instinctively turning his back on the tutor, "here's a little drawing my cousin has been making for some schools you want in the village. She says they must be looked after directly. It's only a scratch; but I think it's pretty—a woman is always shaky in her outlines, you know; but the idea aint bad; is it? She says I am to talk to you on the subject," said the heir; and he spread out the sketch on the table and began to discuss it with the pleased curate. Harry was pleased, too, in a modified way; he thought he was gratifying Matty, and he thought it was good of such a wayward little thing to think about the village children; and finally, he thought if she had been indifferent to the young lord of the manor, she would not have taken so much trouble—which were all agreeable and con-

solatory imaginations. As for Colin, standing up by the table, his eyes suddenly glowed and melted into a mist of sweet compunctions; he stood quite still for a moment, and then he caught the smallest possible gesture, the movement of a finger, the scarce-perceptible lifting of an eyelash, which called him to her side. When he went up to Matty, he found her reading very demurely, with her book held in both her hands, and his little poem placed above the printed page. "It is charming!" said the little witch; "I could not look at it till I had got rid of Harry. It is quite delightful, and it is the greatest shame in the world not to print it; but I can't conceive how you can possibly remember the trumpery little things I say." The conclusion was, that sweeter dreams than usual visited Colin's sleep that night. Miss Matty had not yet done with her interesting victim.

CHAPTER XVII.

COLIN found a letter on the breakfast-table next morning, which gave a new development to his mental struggle. It was from the professor in Glasgow in whose class he had won his greatest laurels. He was not a correspondent nor even a friend of Colin's, and the effect of his letter was increased accordingly. "One of our exhibitions to Balliol is to be competed for immediately after Christmas," wrote the professor. "I am very anxious that you should be a candidate. From all I have seen of you, I am inclined to augur a brilliant career for your talents if they are fully cultivated; and for the credit of our university, as well as for your own sake, I should be glad to see you the holder of this scholarship. Macdonald, your old rival, is a very satisfactory scholar, and has unbounded perseverance and steadiness—doggedness, I might almost say; but he is not the kind of man—I speak to you frankly—to do us any credit at Oxford, nor indeed to do himself any particular advantage. His is the commonly received type of Scotch intelligence, —hard, keen, and unsympathetic,—a form as little true to the character of the nation as conventional types usually are. I don't want, to speak the truth, to send him to my old college as a specimen of what we can produce here. It would be much more satisfactory to myself to send you, and I think you could make better use of the opportunities thus opened to you. Lauderdale informs me that Sir Thomas Frankland is an old friend and one under obligations to you or your family; probably in the circumstances, he would not object to release you from your engagement. The matter is so important, that I don't think you should allow any false delicacy in respect to your present occupation to deter you from attending to your own interests. You are now just at the age to benefit in the highest degree by such an opportunity of prosecuting your studies."

This was the letter which woke all the slumbering forces of Colin's mind to renew the struggle against his heart and his fancy which he had already waged unsuccessfully. He was not of much use to Charley for that day at least; their conjugations, negative or affirmative, made but small progress, and the sharp-witted boy gave his tutor credit for being occupied with Matty, and scorned him accordingly,—of which fact the young man was fortunately quite unaware. When it became possible for Colin to speak to Sir Thomas on the subject, he had again lost himself in a maze of conflicting inclinations. Should he leave this false position, and betake himself again, in improved and altered circumstances, to the business of his life? But Colin saw very clearly that to leave his present position was to leave Matty; to relinquish his first dream; to give up the illusion which, notwithstanding all its drawbacks, had made life lovely to him for the past year at least. Already he had so far recovered his senses as to feel that, if he left her now, he left her forever, and that no new tie could be woven between his humble fortunes and those of the little siren at Wodensbourne. Knowing this, yet all the while subject to her witcheries—hearing the song that lured him on—how was he to take a strenuous resolution and leap back into the disenchanted existence, full of duty but deprived of delights, which awaited him in his proper sphere? He had gone out to the terrace again in the afternoon to argue it out with himself, when he encountered Sir Thomas, who had a cold, and was taking his constitutional discreetly for his health's sake, not without an eye to the garden in which Lady Frankland intended sundry alterations which were not quite satisfactory to her lord. "Of course I don't mean to interfere with my lady's fancies," said the baronet, who was pleased to find some one to whom he could confide his griefs;

"a flower-garden is a woman's department, certainly, if anything is; but I wont have this terrace disturbed. It used to be my mother's favorite walk," said Sir Thomas. The good man went on, a little moved by this particular recollection, meditating his grievance. Sir Thomas had got very nearly to the other end of that table-land of existence which lies between the ascent and the descent,—that interval in which the suns burn hottest, the winds blow coldest, but upon which, when it is fair weather, the best part of life may be spent. By right of his extended prospect, he was naturally a little contemptuous of those griefs and struggles of youth which cloud on the ascending way. Had any one told him of the real conflict which was going on in Colin's mind, the excellent middle-aged man would but have laughed at the boy's folly —a laughter softened yet confirmed by the recollection of similar clouds in his own experience which had long dispersed into thin air. He was a little serious at the present moment, about my lady's caprice, which aimed at altering the smooth stretch of lawn to which his eyes had been accustomed for years, and turned to listen to Colin, when the young man addressed him, with a slight air of impatience, not knowing anything of importance which the youth could have to say.

"I should be glad to know," said Colin, with hesitation, "how long you think Charley will want my services. Lady Frankland was speaking the other day of the improvement in his health."

"Yes," interrupted the baronet, brightening up a little; for his invalid boy was his favorite. "We are greatly obliged to you, Campbell. Charley has brightened and improved amazingly since you came here."

This was an embarrassing way of receiving Colin's attempt at disengaging himself from Charley. The youth hesitated and stammered, and could not well make up his mind what to say next. In his perplexity he took out the letter which had stimulated him to this attempt. Sir Thomas, who was still a little impatient, took it out of his hands and read it. The baronet whistled under his breath with puzzled astonishment as he read. "What does it mean?" said Sir Thomas. "You declined to go to Oxford under my auspices, and now here is something about a scholarship and a competition. You want to go to the university after all; but why, then, reject my proposal when I made it?" said Colin's patron, who thought his *protégé* had chosen a most unlucky moment for changing his mind.

"I beg your pardon," said Colin, "but I could not accept your offer at any time. I could not accept such a favor from any man, and I know no claim I have upon you to warrant"—

"Oh, stuff!" said Sir Thomas; "I know very well what are the obligations I am under to you, Campbell. You saved my son Harry's life; we are all very sensible of your claims. I should certainly have expected you to help Harry as far as was possible, for he is like myself: he is more in the way of cricket and boating, and a day with the hounds when he can get it, than Greek; but I should have felt real pleasure," said the baronet, blandly, "in helping so deserving a young man, and one to whom we all feel so much indebted."

"Thank you," said Colin, who at that moment would have felt real pleasure in punching the head, or maltreating the person of the heir of Wodensbourne; "I suppose we have all some pride in one way or another. I am obliged to you, Sir Thomas, but I could not accept such a favor from you; whereas a prize won at my own university," said the young man, with a little elevation, "is no discredit, but,"—

"Discredit!" said Sir Thomas; "you must have a very strange idea of me, Mr. Campbell, if you imagine it discreditable to accept a kindness at my hands."

"I beg your pardon," again said Colin, who was at his wits' end; "I did not mean to say anything uncivil,—but I am Scotch. I dislike receiving favors. I prefer"—

Sir Thomas rubbed his hands. The apology of nationality went a long way with him, and restored his temper. "Yes, yes; I understand," he said, with good-humored superiority: "you prefer conferring favors,—you like to keep the upper hand. I know a great deal of you Scotchmen; I flatter myself I understand your national character. I should like to know now," said the baronet, confidentially, "if you are set upon becoming a Scotch minister, as you once told me, what good it will do you going to Oxford? Supposing you were to distinguish yourself, which I think very possible; supposing you were to take a—a second-class, or even a

first-class, for example, what would be the good? The reputation and the—the *prestige* and that sort of thing would be altogether lost in Scotland. All the upper classes, you know, have gone from the old Kirk, and you would not please the peasants a bit better for being—indeed, the idea of an Oxford first-class man spending his life preaching to a set of peasants is absurd," said Sir Thomas. "I know more about Scotland than most men: I paid a great deal of attention to that Kirk question. If you go to Oxford I shall expect you to change your mind about your profession. If you don't take to something more ambitious, at least you'll go in for the Church."

"I have always intended so," said Colin, with his grand air, ignoring the baronet's meaning. "To preach, if it is only to peasants, is more worth a man's while than reading prayers forever, like your curate here. I am only Scotch; I know no better," said Colin. "We want changes in Scotland, it is true; but it is as good to work for Scotland as for England—better for me—and I should not grudge my first-class to the service of my native Church," said the youth, with a movement of his head which tossed his heavy brown locks from the concealed forehead. Sir Thomas looked at him with a blank amazement, not knowing in the least what he meant. He thought the young fellow had been piqued somehow, most probably by Matty, and was in a heroical mood, which mood Colin's patron did not pretend to understand.

"Well, well," he said, with some impatience, "I suppose you will take your own way; but I must say it would seem very odd to see an Oxford first-class man in a queer little kirk in the Highlands, preaching a sermon an hour long. Of course, if you like it, that's another matter; and the Scotch certainly do seem to like preaching," said Sir Thomas, with natural wonder; "but we flattered ourselves you were comfortable here. I am sorry you want to go away."

This was taking Colin on his undefended side. The words brought color to his cheeks and moisture to his eye. "Indeed, I don't want to go away," he said, and paused and faltered and grew still more deeply crimson. "I can never forget; I can never think otherwise than with—with gratitude of Wodensbourne." He was going to have said tenderness, but stopped himself in time; and even Sir Thomas, though his eyes were no-way anointed with any special chrism of insight, saw the emotion in his face.

"Then don't go," said the straightforward baronet; "why should you go if you don't want to? We are all most anxious that you should stay. Indeed, it would upset my plans dreadfully if you were to leave Charley at present. He's a wonderful fellow, is Charley. He has twice as much brains as the rest of my boys, sir; and you understand him, Campbell. He is happier, he is stronger, he is even a better fellow,—poor lad, when he's ill he can't be blamed for a bit of temper,—since you came. Indeed, now I think it over," said Sir Thomas, "you will mortify and disappoint me very much if you go away. I quite considered you had accepted Charley's tutorship for a year at least. My dear, here's a pretty business," he said, turning round at the sound of steps and voices, which Colin had already discerned from afar with a feeling that he was now finally vanquished, and could yield with a good grace; "here's Campbell threatening to go away."

"To go away!" said Lady Frankland. "Dear me, he can't mean it. Why, he only came the other day; and Charley, you know," —said the anxious mother; but she recollected Harry's objection to the tutor, and did not make any very warm opposition. Colin, however, was totally unconscious of the lukewarmness of the lady of the house. The little scream of dismay with which Miss Matty received the intelligence might have deluded a wiser man than he.

"Going away! I call it downright treachery," said Miss Matty. "I think it is using you very unkindly, uncle; when he knows you put such dependence on him about Charley, and when *we* know the house has been quite a different thing since Mr. Campbell came," said the little witch, with a double meaning, of which Colin, poor boy, swallowed the sweeter sense, without a moment's hesitation. *He* knew it was not the improvement in Charley's temper which had made the house different to Matty; but Lady Frankland, who was not a woman of imagination, took up seriously what seemed to be the obvious meaning of the words.

"It is quite true. I am sure we are much obliged to Mr. Campbell," she said; "Charley is quite an altered boy; and I had hoped you were liking Wodensbourne. If we could do anything to make it more agreeable to you," said Lady Frankland, graciously, remembering how Charley's "temper" was the horror of the house. "I am sure Sir Thomas would not grudge"—

"Pray do not say any more," said Colin, confused and blushing; "no house could be more—no house could be so agreeable to me. You are all very kind. It was only my—my own"—

What he was going to say is beyond the reach of discovery. He was interrupted by a simultaneous utterance from all the three persons present, of which Colin heard only the soft tones of Matty. "He does not mean it," she said; "he only means to alarm us. I shall not say good-by, nor farewell either. You shall have no good wishes if you *think* of going away. False as a Campbell," said the siren under her breath, with a look which overpowered Colin. He never was quite sure what words followed from the elder people; but even Lady Frankland became fervent when she recalled what Charley had been before the advent of the tutor. "What we should do with him now, if Mr. Campbell was to leave and the house full of people, I tremble to think," said the alarmed mother. When Colin returned to the house, it was with a slightly flattered sense of his own value and importance now to the young man,—with a sense, too, that duty had fully acquitted and justified inclination, and that he could not at the present moment leave his post. This delicious unction he laid to his soul while it was still thrilling with the glance and with the words which Matty, in her alarm, had used to prevent her slave's escape. Whatever happened, he could not, he would not, go; better to perish with such a hope than to thrive without it; and, after all, there was no need for perishing, and next year Oxford might still be practicable. So Colin said to himself, as he made his simple toilet for the evening, with a face which was radiant with secret sunshine, "It was only my—my own"— How had he intended to complete that sentence which the Franklands took out of his mouth? Was he going to say interest, advantage, peace? The unfinished words came to his mind involuntarily when he was alone. They kept flitting in and out, disturbing him with vague touches of uneasiness, asking to be completed. "My own—only my own," Colin said to himself as he went down-stairs. He was saying over the words softly as he came to a landing, upon which there was a great blank staircase-window reaching down to the floor, and darkly filled at this present moment with a gray waste of sky and tumbling clouds, with a wild wind visibly surging through the vacant atmosphere, and conveying almost to the eye in palpable vision an equal demonstration of its presence as it did to the ear.

"My own—only my own. I wonder what you mean: the words sound quite sentimental," said Miss Matty, suddenly appearing at Colin's side, with a light in her hand. The young man was moved strangely; he could not tell why. "I meant my own life, I believe," he said with a sudden impulse, unawares; "only my own life," and went down the next flight of stairs before the young lady, not knowing what he was about. When he came to himself, and stood back, blushing with hot shame, to let her pass, the words came back in a dreary whirl, as if the wind had taken them up and tossed them at him, out of that wild windowful of night. His life—only his life; was that what he had put in comparison with Charley's temper and Matty's vanity, and given up with enthusiasm? Something chill, like a sudden cold current through his veins, ran to Colin's heart for a moment. Next minute he was in the room, where bright lights, and lively talk, and all the superficial cordiality of prosperity and good-humor filled the atmosphere round him. Whatever the stake had been, the cast was over and the decision made.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Christmas guests began to arrive at Wodensbourne on the same day that Colin concluded this sacrifice; and for some days the tutor had scant measure of that society which had lured him to the relinquishment even of his "life." When the house was full of people, Matty found a thousand occupations in which of necessity Colin had no share,—not to say that the young lady felt it a matter of prudence, after she had accepted his sacrifice, to be as little as possible in his society. It was pleas-

ant enough to feel her power, and to know that for her invaluable smile the boy had bartered his independent career; but to put him in the way of claiming any reward for his offering would have been exceedingly inconvenient to Matty. He paid the full penalty accordingly for at least a week thereafter, and had abundant opportunity of counting the cost and seeing what he had done. It was not exhilarating to spend the mornings with Charley, to answer his sharp questions, to satisfy his acute but superficial mind,—in which curiosity was everything, and thought scarcely existed,—and to feel that for this he had given up all that was individual in his life. He had left his own university; he had given up the chance of going to Oxford; he had separated himself from his companions, and given up his occupations—all for the pleasure of teaching Charley, of standing in a corner of the Wodensbourne drawing-room, and feeling acutely through every fibre of his sensitive Scotch frame that he was the tutor, and stood accordingly in about as much relationship to the society in which he found himself as if he had been a New Zealand chief. Colin, however, had made up his mind, and there was nothing for it now but to consent and accept his fate. But it was astonishing how different things looked from that corner of the drawing-room, unspeakably different from the aspect they bore when Colin himself was the only stranger present, and even different from the state of affairs after Harry came home, when the tutor had been thrown into the shade, and a fever of excitement and jealousy had taken possession of Colin's breast. He was very young, and was not used to society. When Matty addressed to her cousin the same witcheries, which she had expended on her worshipper, the young man was profoundly wretched and jealous beyond description. But when he saw her use the same wiles with others, lavishing freely the smiles which had been so precious to his deluded fancy upon one and another, a painful wonder seized the mind of Colin. To stand in that corner possessed by one object was to be behind the scenes. Colin was mortal; he had made a great sacrifice, and he was glad to have made it; but he could not forget it, nor stand at his ease, accepting the civilities that might be offered him like another. At first he expected the equivalent which he imagined had been pledged to him, and when he found out his mistake in that, he discovered also how impossible it was to refrain from a feeling of injury, a jealous consciousness of inadequate appreciation. He himself knew, if nobody else did, the price at which he had bought those siren smiles, and under these circumstances to stand by and see them bestowed upon others, was an experience which conveyed wonderful insight to Colin's inexperienced eyes. If Miss Matty saw him at all, she saw him in the corner, and gave him a nod and a smile in passing, which she thought quite enough to keep him happy for the time being; for, unluckily, the professors of this art of fascination, both male and female, are apt now and then to deceive themselves in the extent of their own powers. While Matty was so perfectly easy in her mind about the tall figure in the corner, he, for his part, was watching her with feelings which it would be very hard to describe. His very admiration, the sincerity of his love, intensified the smouldering germs of disappointment and disgust of which he became uneasily conscious as he stood and watched. He saw by glimpses "the very heart of the machine" from that unnoticed observatory. He saw how she distributed and divided her bright looks, her playful talk; he perceived how she exerted herself to be more and more charming if any victim proved refractory and was slow to yield. Had Colin been kept more perfectly in hand himself, had she devoted a little more time, a little more pains to him, it is probable that the sweet flattery would have prevailed, and that he might have forgiven her the too great readiness she showed to please others. But, as it was, the glamour died out of Colin's eyes, ray by ray, and bitter in the consciousness of all he had sacrificed, he began to find out how little the reward, even could he have obtained it, was worth the price. The process was slow; but it went on night by night—and night by night, as the disenchantment progressed, Colin became more and more unhappy. It was wretched to see the sweet illusion which had made life so beautiful disappearing under his very eyes and to feel that the enchantment, which had to him been so irresistible, was a conscious and studied art, which could be used just when the possessor pleased, with as much coolness as if it had been the art of embroidery or any other feminine handicraft.

A wise spectator might, and probably would, have said, that to learn this lesson was the best thing possible for Colin; but that did not make it the less cruel, the less bitter. In his corner the young man gradually drew nearer and nearer to the fierce misanthropy of outraged youth, that misanthropy which is as warm a protest against common worldliness as the first enthusiasm. But his heart was not yet released, though his eyes were becoming enlightened,—reason works slowly against love,—and bitter at the bottom of all lay the sense of the sacrifice, which was only his life.

A few days after Christmas, a party of the young men staying at Wodensbourne were bound upon a boating expedition, to decide some bet which bore remotely upon one of the greatest events of the university year,—the great match between Oxford and Cambridge. Harry Frankland, who was an Oxford man, though the spires of Cambridge might almost have been visible from his father's park, had there been any eminence high enough to afford a view, was deeply interested on the side of his own university; and some unfortunate youths, belated at Cambridge during the holidays for want of friends, or money, or some other needful adjunct of festival-keeping, were but too glad to seize the opportunity of a day's pleasure. Colin never knew how it was that he came to be asked to join the party. Though Harry's jealousy was gone, for the moment at least, there was not even a pretence of friendship between the tutor and the heir. Nor could Colin ever explain how it was that he consented to go, for scores of objections naturally presented themselves at the first proposal. He was sensitive, affronted, feeling deeply his false position, and ready to receive with suspicion any overtures of friendliness from any man possessed by a benevolent wish to be kind to the tutor. It was, however, his fate to go, and the preliminaries arranged themselves somehow.

They started on a frosty bright morning, when the trees of the park were still only emerging from mists tinted red by the sunshine, a joyous, rather noisy party; they were to walk to the river, which was about six miles off, and, when their business was decided, to lunch at a favorite haunt of the Cambridge undergraduates. Lady Frankland, who did not much approve of the expedition, gave them many counsels about the way. "I wish you would drive and get back by daylight," she said; "otherwise I know you will be taking *that* path across the fields."

"What path?" said some one present; "if there is one specially objectionable, we will be sure to take it."

"I would not if I were you," said Miss Matty. "There is a nasty canal in the way; if you pass it after it is dark, some of you will certainly fall in. It would be a pity to be drowned in such a slimy, shabby way. Much better have all sorts of dog-carts and things, and drive back in time for a cup of tea."

At which speech there was a general laugh. "Matty would give her soul for a cup of tea," said her cousin. "What a precious fright you'll all be in if we're late for dinner. I ought to know all about the canal by this time. Come along. It's too cold to think of drowning," said Harry Frankland, with a filial nod of leave-taking to his mother. As for Matty, she went to the door with them to see them go off, as did some others of the ladies. Matty lifted her pretty cloak sideways and stretched out her hand into the frosty atmosphere as if to feel for rain.

"I thought I saw some drops," she said; "it would be frightful if it came on to rain now, and spoiled our chances of skating. Good-morning, and, whatever you do, I beg of you don't get drowned in the canal. It would be such a shabby way of making an end of one's self," said Matty. When she looked up, she caught Colin's eye, who was the last to leave the house. She was in the humor to be kind to him at that moment. "Shall I say good-by or farewell?" she said, softly, with that look of special confidence which Colin, notwithstanding his new enlightenment, had no heart to resist.

"You shall say what you please," said Colin, lingering on the step beside her. The young man was in a kind of desperate mood. Perhaps he liked to show his companions that he, too, could have his turn.

"Good-by—farewell," said Matty, "but then that implies shaking hands;" and she gave him her pretty hand with a little laugh, making it appear to the group outside that the clownish tutor had insisted upon that unnecessary ceremony. "But whatever you please to say, I like *au revoir* best," said Miss

Matty; "it does not even suggest parting." And she waved her hand as she turned away. "Till we meet again," said the little enchantress. It might be to him especially, or it might be to all, that she made this little gesture of farewell. Anyhow, Colin followed the others with indescribable sensations. He no longer believed in her; but her presence, her looks, her words, had still mastery over him. He had walked half the way before the fumes of that leave-taking had gone out of his brain, though most part of the time he was keeping up a conversation about things in general with the stupidest of the party, who kept pertinaciously by the tutor's side.

The day went off with considerable satisfaction to all the party, and, as Colin and Frankland did not come much in contact, there was little opportunity for displaying the spirit of opposition and contradiction which existed between them. Fortunately, Colin was not at hand to hear Harry's strictures upon his method of handling the oats, nor did Frankland perceive the smile of contemptuous recollection which came upon the tutor's face as he observed how tenderly the heir of Wodensbourne stepped into the boat, keeping clear of the wet as of old. "That fellow has not a bit of science," said young Frankland; "he expects mere strength to do everything. Look how he holds his oar. It never occurs to him that he is in anything lighter than a Highland fishing-cobble. What on earth, I wonder, made us bring him here?"

"Science goes a great way," said the most skilled oarsman of the party; "but I'd like to have the training of Campbell all the same. He talks of going to Balliol, and I shall write to Cox about him."

"What a chest the fellow has," said the admiring spectators. Meanwhile Colin had not hesitated to explain his smile.

"I smile because I recollect smiling years ago," said Colin. "See how Frankland steps into the boat. When he was a boy he did the same. I remember it, and it amused me; for wet feet were a new idea to me in those days;" and Colin laughed outright, and the eyes of the two met. Neither knew what the other had been saying; but the spectators perceived without more words that the young men were not perfectly safe companions for each other, and took precautions, with instinctive comprehension of the case.

"These two don't get on," said one of the party, under his breath. "It is hard upon a fellow, you know, to have another fellow stuck at his side who saved his life, and that sort of thing. I shouldn't like it myself. Somebody keep an eye on Frankland—and on the Scotch fellow, too," said the impartial peacemaker. Luckily, neither of the two who were thus put under friendly surveillance was at all aware of the fact, and Colin submitted, with as good a grace as possible, to the constant companionship of the stupidest and best-humored of the party, who had already bestowed his attentions and society upon the tutor. This state of things, however, did not endure after the lunch, at which it was not possible for Colin to remain a merely humble spectator and sharer of the young men's entertainment. He had not been broken in to such duty; and, excited by exercise and the freedom round him, Colin could no more help talking than he could help the subsequent discovery made by his companions that "the Scotch fellow" was very good company. The young men spent —as was to be expected—a much longer time over their lunch than was at all necessary; and the short winter day was just over when they set out on their way home through the evening mists, which soon deepened into darkness, very faintly lighted by a few doubtful stars. Everybody declared, it is true, that there was to be a moon; indeed, it was with the distinct understanding that there was to be a moon that the party had started walking from Wodensbourne. But the moon showed herself lamentably indifferent to the arrangements which depended on her. She gave not the least sign of appearing anywhere in that vast, windy vault of sky, which indeed had a little light in itself, but could spare scarcely any to show the wayfarers where they were going through the dreary wintry road and between the rustling leafless hedges. When they got into the fields, matters grew rather worse. It was hard to keep the path, harder still to find the stiles and steer through gaps and ditches. The high-road made a round which would lead them three or four miles out of their way, and Frankland insisted upon his own perfect knowledge of the by-way by which they could reach Wodensbourne in an hour.

"Mind the canal we were warned of this morning," suggested one of the party, as they paused in the dark at the corner of a black field to decide which way they should go. "Oh, confound the canal; as if I didn't know every step of the way;" said young Frankland. "It's a settled principle in the female mind that one is bent upon walking into canals whenever one has an opportunity. Come along; if you're afraid, perhaps Campbell will show you the other way."

"Certainly," said Colin, without the least hesitation. "I have no wish to walk into the canal, for my part;" upon which there was a universal protest against parting company. "Come along," said one, who thrust his arm through Colin's as he spoke, but who was no longer the stupid member of the party, "we'll all take our chance together;" but he kept the tutor as far as possible from the line of Wodensbourne. "Frankland and you don't seem to get on," said Colin's companion; "yet he's a very nice fellow when you come to know him. I suppose you must have had some misunderstanding, eh? Wasn't it you who saved his life?"

"I never saved any one's life," said Colin, a little sharply; "and we get on well enough—as well as is necessary. We have no call to see much of each other." After this they all went on through the dark as well as they could, getting into difficulties now and then, sometimes collecting together in a bewildered group at a stile or turning, and afterward streaming on in single file—a succession of black figures which it was impossible to identify except by the voices. Certainly they made noise enough. What with shouts from the beginning to the end of the file, what with bursts of song which came occasionally from one or another or even taken up in uproarious chorus, the profound stillness which enveloped and surrounded them was compelled to own their human presence to the ear at least. In the natural course of their progress, Colin and his immediate companion had got nearly to the front, when the laughter and noise was suddenly interrupted. "I don't quite see where we are going," said Harry. "Stop a bit; I shouldn't mind going on myself, but I don't want to risk you fellows who are frightened for canals. Look here; the road ought to have gone on at this corner, but here's nothing but a hedge. Keep where you are till I look out. There's a light over there, but I can't tell what's between.

"Perhaps it's the canal," said some one behind.

"Oh, yes, of course it's the canal," said Frankland, with irritation. "You stand back till I try; if I fall in, it's my own fault, which will be a consolation to my friends," cried the angry guide. He started forward impatiently, not, however, without being closely followed by two or three, among whom was Colin.

"Don't be foolish, Frankland," said one voice in the darkness; "let us all go together—let us be cautious. I feel something like gravel under my feet. Steady, steady; feel with your foot before you put it down. Oh! good heavens, what is it?" The voice broke off abruptly; a loud splash and a cry ensued, and the young men behind saw the figures in advance of them suddenly drop and disappear. It *was* the canal, upon which they had been making unawares. Two out of the four had only stumbled on the bank, and rose up again immediately; and as those behind, afraid to press forward, not knowing what to do, stood appalled, another and another figure scrambled up with difficulty, calling for help out of the water, into which they had not, however plunged deeply enough to peril their lives. Then there was a terrible momentary pause.

"Are we all here?" said Colin. His voice sounded like a funeral bell pealing through the darkness. He knew they were not all there. He, with his keen eyes, rendered keener by opposition and enmity, had seen beyond mistake that the first of all went down and had not risen again. The consciousness made his voice tragic as it ran through the darkness. Somebody shouted, "Yes, yes, thank God!" in reply. It was only a second, but years of life rolled up upon Colin in that moment of time,—years of most troublous existence behind; years of fair life before. Should he let him die? It was not his fault; nobody could blame him. And what right had *he* to risk his life a second time for Harry Frankland? All that a murderer, all that a martyr could feel rushed through Colin's mind in that instant of horrible indecision. Then somebody said, "Frankland, Frankland! where is Frankland?" That voice was the touch of fate. With a strange shout, of which he was unconscious, Colin

plunged into the black invisible stream. By this time the others of the party saw with unspeakable relief lights approaching, and heard through the darkness voices of men coming to their assistance. They were close by one of the locks of the canal; and it was the keeper of it, not unused to such accidents, who came hurrying to give what help was possible. His lantern and some torches which the anxious young men managed to light, threw a wild illumination over the muddy, motionless stream, in which two of their number, lately as gay and light-hearted as any, were now struggling for their life. The same light flared horribly over the two motionless figures, which, after an interval which seemed like years to the bystanders, were at length brought out of the blackness; one of them still retaining strength and consciousness to drag the other with him up the stony margin before his senses failed. They lay silent both, with pallid faces, upon the hard path; one as like death as the other, with a kind of stony, ghostly resemblance in their white insensibility, except that there was blood on the lips of one, who must have struck, the lockman said, upon some part of the lock. They were carried into the cottage, and hurried messengers sent to the nearest doctor and to Wodensbourne. Meanwhile the two lay together, pallid and motionless, nobody knowing which was living and which dead.

PART VII.—CHAPTER XIX.

COLIN never ascertained what were the events immediately succeeding his plunge into the canal; all he could recall dimly of that strange crisis in his life was a sense of slow motion in which he himself was passive, and of looking up at the stars in a dark-blue, frosty, winterly sky, with a vague wonder in his mind how it was that he saw them so clearly, and whether it was they or he that moved. Afterwards, when his mind became clear, it grew apparent to him that he must have opened his eyes for a moment while he was being carried home; but there intervened a period during which he heard nothing distinctly, and in which the only clear point to him was this gleam of starlight, and this accompanying sense of motion, which perplexed his faculties in his weakness. While he lay feverish and unconscious, he kept repeating, to the amazement of the bystanders, two stray lines which had no apparent connection with any of the circumstances surrounding him.

"Each with its little space of sky,
And little lot of stars,"

poor Colin said to himself over and over, without knowing it. It had been only for a moment that he opened his eyes out of the torpor which was all but death; but that moment was enough to color all the wanderings of his mind while still the weakness of the body dominated and overpowered it. Like a picture or a dream, he kept in his recollection the sharp, frosty glimmer, the cold twinkling of those passionless, distant lights, and with it a sense of rushing air and universal chill, and a sound and sense of wending his way between rustling hedges, though all the while he was immovable. That feeling remained with him till he woke from a long sleep one afternoon when the twilight was setting in, and found himself in a room which was not his own room, lying in a great bed hung with crimson curtains, which were made still more crimson by a ruddy glow of firelight, which flashed reflections out of the great mirror opposite the end of the bed. Colin lay awhile in a pause of wonder and admiration when he woke. The starlight went out of his eyes and the chill out of his frame, and a certain sense of languid comfort came over him. When he said, "Where am I?" faintly, in a voice which he could scarcely recognize for his own, two woman rose hastily and approached him. One of these was Lady Frankland, the other a nurse. While the attendant hurried forward to see if he wanted anything, Lady Frankland took his hand and pressed it warmly in both hers. "You shall hear all about it to-morrow," she said, with the tears in her eyes; "now you will do well; but you must not exert yourself to-night. We have all been so anxious about you. Hush, hush! You must take this; you must not ask any more questions to-night." What he had to take was some warm jelly, of which he swallowed a little, with wonder and difficulty. He did not understand what had befallen, or how he had been reduced to this invalid condition. "Hush, hush! you must not ask any questions to-night," said Lady Frankland; and she went to the door as if to leave the room, and then came back again and bent over Colin and kissed his forehead, with her eyes shining through tears. "God bless you and reward you!" she said, smiling and crying over him; "you will do well now; you have a mother's blessing and a mother's prayers;" and with these strange words she went away hastily, as if not trusting herself to say more. Colin lay back on his pillow with his mind full of wonder, and, catching at the clew she had given him, made desperate, feeble efforts to piece it out, and get back again into his life. He found it so hard fighting through that moment of starlight which still haunted him that he had to go to sleep upon it, but by and by woke up again when all was silent,—when the light was shaded, and the nurse reclining in an easy-chair, and everything betokened night,—and lying awake for an hour or two, at last began to gather himself up, and recollect what had happened. He had almost leaped from his bed when he recalled the scene by the canal,—his conviction that Frankland had gone down, his own desperate plunge. But Colin was past leaping from his bed, for that time at least. He followed out this recollection, painfully trying to think what had occurred. Was Harry Frankland alive or dead? Had he himself paused too long on the brink, and was the heir of Wodensbourne gone out of all his privileges and superiorities? That was the interpretation that appeared most likely to Colin. It seemed to him to explain Lady Frankland's tears and pathos of grati-

tude. The tutor had suffered in his attempt to save the son, and the parents, moved by the tenderness of grief, were thankful for his ineffectual efforts. As he lay awake in the silence, it appeared to him that this was the explanation, and he, too, thought with a certain pathos and compunction of Harry,—his instinctive rival, his natural opponent. Was it thus he had fallen, so near the beginning of the way,—snatched out of the life which had so many charms, so many advantages for him? As Colin lay alone in the silence, his thoughts went out to that unknown life into which he could not but imagine the other young man, who was yesterday—was it yesterday?—as strong and lifelike as himself, had passed so suddenly. Life had never seemed so fair, so bright, so hopeful to himself as while he thus followed with wistful eyes the imaginary path of Harry into the unknown awe and darkness. The thought touched him deeply, profoundly, with wistful pity, with wonder and inquiry. Where was he now, this youth who had so lately been by his side? Had he found out those problems that trouble men for their life long? Had existence grown already clear and intelligible to the eyes which in this world had cared but little to investigate its mysteries?

While Colin's mind was thus occupied, it occurred to him suddenly to wonder why he himself was so ill and so feeble. He had no inclination to get up from the bed on which he lay. Sometimes he coughed, and the cough pained him; his very breathing was a fatigue to him now and then. As he lay pondering this new thought, curious half-recollections, as of things that had happened in a dream, came into Colin's mind; visions of doctors examining some one,—he scarcely knew whether it was himself or another,—and of conversations that had been held over his bed. As he struggled through these confusing mazes of recollection or imagination, his head began to ache and his heart to beat; and finally his uneasy movements woke the nurse, who was alarmed, and would not listen to any of the questions he addressed to her.

"My lady told you as you'd hear everything to-morrow," said Colin's attendant; "for goodness gracious' sake, take your draught, do, and lie still; and don't go a-moidering and a-bothering, and take away a poor woman's character, as was never known to fall asleep before, nor wouldn't but for thinking you was better and didn't want nothing." It was strange to the vigorous young man, who had never been in the hands of a nurse in his life, to feel himself constrained to obey,—to feel, indeed, that he had no power to resist, but was reduced to utter humiliation and dependence, he could not tell how. He fell asleep afterward, and dreamed of Harry Frankland drowning, and of himself going down, down through the muddy, black water—always down, in giddy circles of descent, as if it were bottomless. When he awoke again, it was morning, and his attendant was putting his room to rights, and disposed to regard himself with more friendly eyes. "Don't you go disturbing of yourself," said the nurse, "and persuading of the doctor as you aint no better. You're a deal better, if he did but know it. What's come to you? It's all along of falling in the canal that night along of Mr. Harry. If you takes care and don't get no more cold, you'll do well."

"Along with Mr. Harry—poor Harry!—and he"— said Colin. His own voice sounded very strange to him, thin and far-off, like a shadow of its former self. When he asked this question, the profoundest wistful pity filled the young man's heart. He was sorry to the depths of his soul for the other life which had, he supposed, gone out in darkness. "Poor Frankland!" he repeated to himself, with an action of mournful regret. *He* had been saved, and the other lost. So he thought, and the thought went to his heart.

"Mr. Harry was saved, sir, when you was drownded," said the nurse, who was totally unconscious of Colin's feelings; "he's fine and hearty again, is Mr. Harry. Bless you, a ducking aint nothing to him. As for you," continued the woman, going calmly about her occupations,—"they say it wasn't the drowning, it was the striking against"—

"I understand," said Colin. He stopped her further explanations with a curious sharpness which he was not responsible for, at which he himself wondered. Was not he glad that Harry Frankland lived? But then, to be sure, there came upon him the everlasting contrast,—the good fortune and unfailing luck of his rival, who was well and hearty, while Colin, who would have been in no dan-

ger but for him, lay helpless in bed! He began to chafe at himself, as he lay, angry and helpless, submitting to the nurse's attentions. What a poor weakling anybody must think him, to fall ill of the ducking which had done no harm to Harry! He felt ridiculous, contemptible, weak,—which was the worst of all,—thinking with impatience of the thanks, which, presently, Lady Frankland would come to pay him, and the renewed obligations of which the family would be conscious. If he only could get up, and get back to his own room! But, when he made the attempt, Colin was glad enough to fall back again upon his pillows, wondering and dismayed. Harry was well, and had taken no harm; what could be the meaning of *his* sudden, unlooked-for weakness?

Lady Frankland came into the room, as he had foreseen, while it was still little more than daylight of the winter morning. She had always been kind to Colin,—indifferently, amiably kind, for the most part, with a goodness which bore no particular reference to him, but sprung from her own disposition solely. This time there was a change. She sat down by his side with nervous, wistful looks, with an anxious, almost frightened expression. She asked him how he was, with a kind of tremulous tenderness, and questioned the nurse as to how he had slept. "I am so glad to hear you have had a refreshing sleep," she said, with an anxious smile, and even laid her soft white hand upon Colin's, and caressed it as his own mother might have done, while she questioned his face, his aspect, his looks, with the speechless scrutiny of an anxious woman. Somehow, these looks, which were so solicitous and wistful, made Colin more impatient than ever.

"I am at a loss to understand why I am lying here," he said, with a forced smile; "I used to think I could stand a ducking as well as most people. It is humiliating to find myself laid up like a child, by a touch of cold water"—

"Oh, Mr. Campbell, pray don't say so!" said Lady Frankland; "it was not the cold water; you know you struck against— Oh, how can we thank you enough!—how can I even now express my gratitude!" said the poor lady, grasping his hands in both hers, her eyes filling unawares with tears.

"There is no need for gratitude," said Colin, drawing away his hand with an impatience that he could not have explained. "I am sorry to find myself such a poor creature that I have to be nursed, and give you trouble. Your son is all right, I hear." This he said with an effort at friendliness, which cost him some trouble. He scorned to seem to envy the young favorite of fortune; but, it was annoying to feel that the strength he was secretly proud of had given way at so slight a trial. He turned his face a little more towards the wall, and away from Harry's mother, as he spoke.

"Oh, yes," said Lady Frankland, "he is quite well, and he is very, very grateful to you, dear Mr. Campbell. Believe me, we are all very grateful. Harry is so shy, and he has never once had an opportunity to pay you that—that attention which you deserve at his hands, and it showed such noble and disinterested regard on your part"—

"Pray, don't say so," said Colin, abruptly; "you make me uncomfortable; there was no regard whatever in the case."

"Ah, yes! you say so to lighten our sense of obligation," said Lady Frankland. "It is so good, so kind of you! And when I think what it has made you suffer,—but I am sure you will believe that there is nothing we would not do to show our gratitude. If you were our own son, neither Sir Thomas nor I could be more anxious. We have sent for Sir Apsley Wendown, and I hope he will arrive to-day; and we have sent for your dear mother, Mr. Campbell."

"My mother?" said Colin. He was so much startled that he raised himself up on his pillows without thinking, and as he did so, was seized by a horrible pain which took away his breath. "Sir Apsley Wendown and my mother? What does it mean?" the young man said, gasping, as he managed to slide down again into his former recumbent position. "Am I ill? or does all this commotion arise simply from an unlooked-for ducking, and a knock against the side of the canal?" He got this out with difficulty, though he strove with all his might to conceal the trouble it gave him; then he turned his eyes to Lady Frankland, who sat wringing her hands, and full of agitation by his bedside. The poor lady had altogether lost her good-natured and amiable composure. Whatever she had to say to him,—whatever the

character of the communication might be, disturbed her greatly. She wrung her hands, gave a painful, hurried glance at him, and then withdrew her eyes from his inquiring looks. All this time, Colin lay impatient, looking at her, wondering, with a sharp sensation of anger, what she could have to say.

"Dear Mr. Campbell," she said at length, "you are ill; you have been wandering and insensible. Oh, it is hard to think you are suffering for your goodness,—suffering for us! We could not trust you to our doctor here after we knew; we thought it best to have the best advice, and we thought you would prefer to have your mother. I would have nursed you myself and tended you night and day," said Lady Frankland, with enthusiasm; "I owe you that and a great deal more,—you who have saved my dear boy."

"What is the matter with me?" said Colin. It appeared to him as if a great cloud was rolling up over the sky, throwing upon him a strange and ominous shadow. He scarcely heard what she said. He did not pay any attention to her. What was Henry Frankland's mother to him, or her thanks, or the things she was willing to do to show her gratitude? He wanted to know why he was lying there powerless, unable to move himself. That was the first thing to be thought of. As for Lady Frankland, she wrung her hands again, and hesitated more and more.

"I hope God will reward you!" said the agitated woman; "I would give everything I have in the world to see you well and strong as you were when you came here. Oh, Mr. Campbell, if you only could know the feeling that is in all our hearts!" It was her kindness, her reluctance to give him pain, her unfeigned distress, that made her prolong Colin's suspense, and drive him frantic with these exasperating professions of regard, for which, true as they doubtless were, he did not care.

"I suppose I've broken some of my bones," said Colin; "it would be real kindness if you would tell me what is the matter. Will it take a long time to mend me? I should be glad to know, at least, what it is."

Impelled by his looks and his tone, Lady Frankland burst into her statement at last. "You have broken some of your ribs," she said; "but I don't think that is of so much importance; Sir Apsley, when he comes, will tell us. He is coming to-day and you are looking so much better. It was old Mr. Eyre who gave us such a fright yesterday. He said your lungs had been injured somehow, and that you might never—that it might be a long time—that it might keep you delicate; but even if that were the case, with care and a warm climate—oh, Mr. Campbell! I think he is mistaken; he is always such a croaker. I think—I hope—I am almost sure Sir Apsley will set you all right."

Again Colin had risen in his bed with a little start. This time he was scarcely sensible of the pain which every motion caused him. He fancied afterwards that for that moment his heart stood still in his bosom, and the pulses in his veins stopped beating. The shock was so strange, so sudden, so unlooked for. He sat up—struggled up—upon his pillows, and instinctively and unawares faced and confronted the new Thing which approached him. In that moment of strange consciousness and revelation he felt that the intimation was true,—that his doom was sealed and his days numbered. He did not look at the anxious woman who was wringing her hands by his bedside, nor at any external object; but with an irresistible impulse confronted dumbly the new world,—the changed existence. When he laid himself down again, it seemed to Colin as if years had passed over his head. He said some vague words of thanks, without being very well aware what he was saying, to Lady Frankland, and then lay silent, stunned, and bewildered, like a man who had received a blow. What she said to him afterward, or how long she remained in the room, he was scarcely aware of. Colin belonged to a race which had no weak members; he had been used to nothing but strength and health—wholesome rural life and vigor—all his days. He had even learned, without knowing it, to take a certain pride in his own physical gifts, and in those of his family, and to look with compassionate contempt on people who were "delicate" and obliged to take care of themselves. The idea that such a fate might by any possibility fall to himself had never once occurred to him. It was an impossible contingency at which, even a week ago, the strong young man, just entering upon the full possession of his powers, would have laughed, as beyond the range of imagination. He might die, no doubt, like any other man,—might be snatched out of the

world by violent disease or sudden fever, as other strong men had been; but to have his strength stolen from him while still his life remained had appeared a thing beyond the bounds of possibility to Colin. As he lay now, stunned by this unlooked-for fall, there came before his eyes, as vividly as if he saw them in actual presence, the sick people of his native district,—the young men and the young women who now and then paid, even on the sweet shores of the Holy Loch, the terrible toll which consumption takes of all the nations of the north. One of them, a young man about his own age, who, like himself, had been in training for the Scotch Church, whom Colin had pitied with all his kind heart,—with the deepest half-remorseful sense of his own superior happiness,—came before him with intense distinctness as he lay silent-struck by the cold shadow of fate. He could almost have thought that he saw the spectral, attenuated form, with its hectic cheeks, its thin, long, wasted hands, its preternatural length of limb, seated in the old, high-backed easy-chair which harmonized well enough with the other articles in the farmhouse parlor, but would have been oddly out of place in the room where Colin lay. All the invalid's life appeared to him in a sudden flash of recollection,—the kindly neighbors' visits; the books and papers which were lent him; the soup and jellies which the minister's wife and the other ladies of the parish, few in number as they were, kept him provided with. Colin could even remember his own periodical visits; his efforts to think what would interest the sick man; his pity and wonder and almost contempt for the patience which could endure, and even take a pleasure in, the poor comforts of the fading life. God help him! was this what he himself was coming to? was this all he had to anticipate? Colin's heart gave a strange leap in his breast at the thought. A sudden wild throb, a sense of something intolerable, a cry against the fate which was too hard, which could not be borne, rose within him, and produced a momentary sickness, which took the light out of his eyes, and made everything swim round him in a kind of dizzy gloom. Had he been standing, he would have fallen down, and the bystanders would have said he had fainted. But he had not fainted; he was bitterly, painfully conscious of everything. It was only his heart that fluttered in his breast like a wounded bird; it was only his mind that had been struck, and reeled. So much absorbed was he that he did not hear the voice of the nurse, who brought him some invalid nourishment, and who became frightened when she got no answer, and shook him violently by the arm. "Lord bless us, he's gone!" exclaimed the woman; and she was but little reassured when her patient turned upon her with dry lips and a glittering eye. "I am not gone yet," said Colin; "there is no such luck for me;" and then he began once more to picture out to himself the sick man at the Holy Loch, with the little tray on the table beside him, and his little basin of soup. God help him! was this how he was to be for all the rest of his life?

This was how he sustained the first physical shock of the intimation which poor Lady Frankland had made to him with so much distress and compunction. It is hard enough at any time to receive a sentence of death; yet Colin could have died bravely, had that been all that was required of him. It was the life in death thus suddenly presented before his eyes that appalled his soul and made his heart sick. And after that, Heaven knows, there were other considerations still more hard to encounter. If we were to say, that the young man thus stopped short in the heydey of his life bethought himself immediately of what is called preparation for dying, it would be both false and foolish. Colin had a desperate passage to make before he came to that. As these moments, which were like hours, passed on, he came to consider the matter in its larger aspects. But for Harry Frankland, he would have been in no danger, and now Harry Frankland was safe, strong, and in the full enjoyment of his life, while Colin lay broken and helpless, shipwrecked at the beginning of his career. Why was it? Had God ordained this horrible injustice, this cruel fate? As Colin looked at it, out of the clouds that were closing round him, that fair career which was never to be accomplished stretched bright before him, as noble a future as ever was contemplated by man. It had its drawbacks and disadvantages when he looked at it a week before, and might, perhaps, have turned out a commonplace life enough, had it come to its daily fulfilment; but now, when it had suddenly become impossible, what a career it

seemed! Not of selfish profit, of money-making, or personal advantage,—a life which was to be for the use of his country, for the service of his church, for the furtherance of everything that was honest and lovely and of good report. He stood here, stayed upon the threshold of his life, and looked at it with wonder and despair. This existence God had cut short and put an end to. Why? That another man might live and enjoy his commonplace pleasures; might come into possession of all the comforts of the world; might fill a high position without knowing, without caring for it; might hunt and shoot and fall asleep after dinner, as his father had done before him.

In the great darkness, Colin's heart cried out with a cry of anguish and terrible surprise to the invisible, inexorable God, "Why? Why?" Was one of His creatures less dear, less precious to him than another that he should make this terrible difference The pure life, the high hopes, the human purpose and human happiness, were they as nothing to the great Creator who had brought them into being and suffered them to bud and blossom only that he might crush them with his hands? Colin lay still in his bed, with his lips set close and his eyes straining into that unfathomable darkness. The bitterness of death took possession of his soul,—a bitterness heavier, more terrible than that of death. His trust, his faith, had given way. God sat veiled upon his awful throne, concealed by a horrible cloud of disappointment and incomprehension. Neither love nor justice, neither mercy nor equal dealing, was in this strange, unintelligible contrast of one man's loss and another man's gain. As the young man lay struggling in this hour of darkness, the God of his youth disappeared from him, the Saviour of his childhood withdrew, a sorrowful shadow, into the angry heavens. What was left? Was it a capricious Deity, ruled by incomprehensible impulses of favor and of scorn? Was it a blind and hideous Chance, indifferent alike to happiness and misery? Was it some impious power, owning no everlasting rule of right and wrong, of good and evil, who trampled at its will upon the hearts and hopes of men? Colin was asking himself these terrible questions when the curtain was softly drawn, and a face looked down upon him, in which tenderness and grief and pity had come to such a climax as no words could convey any impression of. It was his mother who stood beside him, stretching out her arms like a pitying angel, yearning over him with the anguish and the impatience of love. Sometimes, surely, the Master gives us in the fellowship of his sufferings a human pang beyond his own,—the will to suffer in the stead of those we love, without the power.

CHAPTER XX.

"THEY'RE awfu' grateful, Colin; I canna but say that for them," said Mrs. Campbell; "and as anxious as if you were their own son. I'll no undertake to say that I havena an unchristian feeling myself to Harry Frankland; but, when you're a' weel and strong, Colin"—

"And what if I am never well and strong?" said the young man. His mother's presence had subdued and silenced, at least for a time, the wild questions in his heart. She had taken them upon herself, though he did not know it. So far human love can stretch its fellowship in the sufferings of its Master,—not to the extent of full substitution, of salvation temporal or spiritual, but, at least, to a modified deliverance. She had soothed her son and eased him of his burden, but in so doing had taken it to herself. The eagle that had been gnawing his heart had gone to fix its talons in hers; but she carried it, like the Spartan, under her mantle, and smiled while it rent her in twain.

"Whisht, whisht!" she said, in her martyrdom of composure and calm looks, and took her boy's hand and held it between hers —God only could tell how fondly—with a firm, warm grasp that seemed to hold him fast to life. "Colin, my man, it's a' in God's hands," said the mistress of Ramore; "whiles his ways are awfu' mysterious. I'm no one that proposes to read them, or see a'thing plain, like some folk; but I canna think he ever makes a mistake, or lets anything go by hazard. We'll bide his time, Colin; and who can tell what mercy and goodness he may have in his hand?"

"Mercy and goodness, or, perhaps, the contrary," said Colin. If he had not been a little comforted and eased in his heart, he would not have given utterance to words which he felt to be unchristian. But now, with his longing to be soothed and to accept the softening influence which surrounded

him, came an impulse to speak,—to use words which were even more strong than his feelings. As for his mother, she was too thoughtful a woman, and had in her own heart too heavy a burden, to appear shocked by what he said.

"Maybe what appears to us the contrary," she said, "though that maun be but an appearance, like most things in this life. I'm no one to deny my ain heart, or make a show as if I understood the ways of the Lord, or could, ay, in my poor way, approve of them, if a mortal creature might daur to say so, Colin. There's things he does that appear a' wrang to me,—I canna but say it. I'm no doubting his wisdom nor yet his love, but there's mony a thing he does that I canna follow, nor see onything in but loss and misery. But oh, Colin, my bonnie man, that's nae cause for doubting him! He maun have his ain reasons, and they maun be better reasons than ours. If you'll close your eyes, and try and get a sleep, I'll take a breath of air to myself before night sets in. I was aye an awfu' woman for the air; and eh, laddie! I think ye'll be thankful to get back to Ramore after this dreary country, where there's neither hill nor glen; though maybe it might be cauld for you in the spring, when there's so much soft weather," said the tender woman, smoothing his pillows, and bending over him with her anxious smile. "It minds me o' the time when you were my baby, Colin, to get you into my hands again. They say a woman's aye a queen in a sick-room," said the mistress. Her smile was such that tears would have been less sad; and she was impatient to be gone,—to leave her son's bedside,—because she felt herself at the furthest stretch of endurance, and knew that her strained powers must soon give way. Perhaps Colin, too, understood what it was which made his mother so anxious to leave him; for he turned his face to the waning evening light, and closed his eyes, and after a while, seemed to sleep. When he had lain thus quietly for some time, the poor mother stole down-stairs and out into the wintry twilight. Her heart was breaking in her tender bosom; her strength had been strained to the utmost bounds of possibility; and nature demanded at least the relief of tears. Two days before, she had been tranquil and content in her peaceful life at home. When Sir Thomas Frankland's telegram came late at night, like a sudden thunderbolt into the quiet house, the Holy Loch was asleep and at rest, cradled in sweet darkness, and watched by fitful glances of that moon for which Colin and his friends had looked to guide them on the night of the accident; and no means of communicating with the world until the morning was possible to the inhabitants of Ramore. The anxious mother, whose eyes had not been visited with sleep through all the lingering winter night, set off by dawn to thread her weary, unaccustomed way through all the mazes of the railways which were to convey her to Wodensbourne. She had neither servant nor friend to manage for her; and no fine lady, accustomed to the most careful guardianship, could be more unused to the responsibilities of travelling than Mrs. Campbell. When she arrived, it was to find her boy, her first-born, stretched helpless upon his bed, to see the examination made by the great doctor from London, to hear his guarded statements, his feebly-expressed hopes, which conveyed only despair, and with that sudden arrow quivering in her heart, to undertake the duties of a cheerful nurse,—to keep smiling upon Colin, telling him the news of the parish, the events of the country-side, as if her coming here had been a holiday. All this together—though so many women have borne it, and though the mistress of Ramore was able to bear it, and more, for her boy's sake—was a hard strain upon her. When she got down-stairs into the air, the first thing she did was to sit down on the steps of the glass-door which led into the terrace and cry bitterly and silently. She was alone among strangers, with scarcely even a friendly feature of familiar nature to give her a little confidence. The aspect of the great house, stretching its long wings and solemn front into the twilight, containing a whole community of people unknown to her, whose very voices were strange, and sounded like a foreign tongue, completed the forlorn sense she had of absence from everything that could help or console; and when, in the restlessness of her musing, she got up and began to walk about upon that deserted terrace, which Colin had paced so often, all Colin's questions, all his doubts, rushed with double force and feminine passion into his mother's mind. As she pursued her uncertain way, her eye was attracted by the lights in the windows. One of them was large and low,

and so close upon the terrace that she could not help seeing the interior, and what was passing there. Harry Frankland was standing by the fire with his cousin. The long billiard-table behind them, and the cue which Miss Matty still held in her hand did not enlighten Mrs. Campbell as to what they had been doing. Matty had laid her disengaged hand on her cousin's shoulder, and was looking up, as if pleading for something, into his face; and the firelight, which gleamed upon them both, gave color and brightness to the two young faces, which seemed to the sorrowful woman outside to be glowing with health and love and happiness. When Mrs. Campbell looked upon this scene, her heart cried out in her breast. It was Colin's question that came to her lips as she hurried past in the cold and the gathering darkness:—

"Why? O God! why?" Her son struck to the earth in the bloom of his young life,—rooted up like a young tree, or a silly flower,—and this youth, this other woman's son, taking the happiness that should have been for Colin. Why was it? The poor woman called in her misery upon the heavens and the earth to answer her—Why? One deprived of all, another possessed of everything that soul of man could desire,—one heart smitten and rent asunder, and another reposing in quiet and happiness. As she went on in her haste, without knowing where she went, another window caught the mistress's eye. It was the nursery window where all the little ones were holding high carnival. Little boys and little girls, the younger branches of the large happy family, with again the light gleaming rosy over their childish faces. The eldest of all was having her toilet made for presentation in the drawing-room, and at sight of her, another blow keen and poignant went to Mrs. Campbell's heart. Just such a child had been the little maiden, the little daughter who once made sunshine in the homely house of Ramore. It came upon the poor mother in the darkness, to think what that child would have been to her now, had she lived,—how her woman-child would have suffered with her, wept with her, helped to bear the burden of her woe. Her heart yearned and longed in her new grief over the little one who had been gone four years. She turned away hastily from the bright window and the gay group, and sunk down upon her knees on the ground with a sob that came from her heart,—"Why? oh, why?" God had his reasons; but what were they! The agony of loss, in which there seemed no possible gain; the bitterness of suffering, without knowing any reason for it, overpowered her. The contrast of her own trouble with the happiness, the full possession, the universal prosperity and comfort which she saw, struck her sharply with something which was not envy of her neighbor, but the appeal of an amazed anguish to God. "The ways of the Lord are not equal," she was saying in her soul. Was it, as nature suggested, with natural groans, because he loved her less, or, as the minister said, because he loved her more, that God sent upon her those pangs, and demanded from her those sacrifices? Thus she cried out of the depths, not knowing what she said. "If I had but had my Jeanie!" the poor woman moaned to herself, with a vision of a consoling angel, a daughter, another dearer, fairer self, who would have helped to bear all her burdens. But God had not afforded her that comfort, the dearest consolation to a woman. When she had wept out those few bitter tears, that are all of which the heart is capable when it is no longer young, she gathered herself up out of the darkness and prepared to go in again to Colin's bedside. Though she had received no answer to her question,—though neither God himself, nor his angels, nor any celestial creature, had gleamed through the everlasting veil, and given her a glimpse of that divine meaning which it is so hard to read,—there was a certain relief in the question itself, and in the tears that had been wrung out of her heart. And so it was that, when Matty Frankland came lightly out of the billiard-room, on her way to dress for dinner, Mrs. Campbell, whom she met coming in from the terrace, did not appear to her to bear a different aspect from that of the mistress of Ramore. Matty did not lose a minute in making her advances to Colin's mother. She was, indeed, extremely sorry, and had even been conscious of a passing thought similar to that which had struggled passionately into being, both in Colin's mind and in his mother's,—a passing sense of wonder why Harry, who was good for nothing in particular, should have been saved, and Colin, who was what Miss Matty called "so very clever," should have been the sufferer. Such

a doubt, had it gone deep enough,—had it become an outcry of the soul, as it was with the others,—would have made an infidel of that little woman of the world. She ran to Mrs. Campbell, and took her hand, and led her into the billiard-room, the door of which stood open. "Oh, dear Mrs. Campbell, come and tell me about him," she said; and, as it had been the conjunction of a little real feeling with her habitual wiles that brought Colin under her influence, the same thing moved his mother at least to tolerate the inquiry. She drew away her hand with some impatience from the little enchantress, but her tender heart smote her when she saw an involuntary tear in Matty's eye. Perhaps, after all, it was less her fault than her misfortune; and the mistress followed the girl into the room with less dislike, and more toleration, than she would have supposed possible. It might be, after all, the older people—to whom worldliness came by nature, as the Hindoos thought—who were to blame.

"Oh, Mrs. Campbell, I am so sorry,—I cannot tell you how sorry I am," cried Matty, —and she spoke only the truth, and had real tears in her eyes,—"to think that he should save my cousin again, and suffer so for his goodness. Don't be angry with us, though, indeed, I should not wonder if you could not bear our very name; I am sure I should not, if I were you."

"Na, God forbid," said the mistress. She was but half satisfied of the reality of the young lady's professions, and this suspicion, so unusual to her, gave diguity to her speech.

"It wasna you nor ony mortal person, but his own heart, that moved my Colin. You could do an awfu' deal," said Colin's mother, looking with a woman's look of disapproving admiration on Matty's pretty face; "but you couldna move my son like his ain generous will. He never was one to think of his ain—comfort"—continued Mrs. Campbell with a little shudder for something in her throat prevented her from saying his life —"when a fellow-creature was in danger. It was his ain heart that was to blame,—if anything was to blame,—and not you."

And the homely woman's eyes went past her questioner with that same look which in Colin had so often baffled Miss Matty, showing that the higher spirit had gone beyond the lesser into its own element, where only its equals could follow. The girl was awed for the moment, and humbled. Not for her poor sake, not for Harry Frankland, who was of no great account to anybody out of his own family, but because of his own nature, which would not permit him to see another perish, had Colin suffered. This thought, imperfectly as she understood it, stopped the voluble sympathy, pity, and distress on Matty's lips. She no longer knew what to say, and, after an awkward pause, could only stammer over her old commonplaces. "Oh, dear, Mrs. Campbell, I am so sorry; I would give anything in the world to make him well again, and I only hope you wont be angry with us," said Matty, with a suppressed sob, which was partly fright and partly feeling. The eyes of the mistress came back at the sound of the girl's voice.

"I'm no angry," she said.—"God forbid; though I might have something to say to *you* if my heart could speak. The like of you whiles do mair harm in this world, Miss Frankland, than greater sinners. I'm no saying you kent what you were doing; but, if it had not been for you, my Colin would never have come near this place. You beguiled my son with your pleasant words and your bonnie face. He had nae mair need to come here to be tutor to yon bit crooked callant," said the mistress, with involuntary bitterness, "than Maister Frankland himself. But he thought to be near you, that had beguiled him, and made him give mair heed to your fables than to anything else that was true in life. I'm no blaming my Colin," said the mistress, with an unconscious elevation of her head; "he never had kent onything but truth a' his days, and, if he wasna to believe in a woman that smiled on him and enticed him to her, what was he to believe in at his years? Nor I'm no to call angry at you," said Colin's mother, looking from the elevation of age and nature upon Miss Matty, who drooped instinctively, and became conscious what a trifling little soul she was. "We a' act according to our ain nature, and you wasna capable of perceiving what harm you could do; but, if you should ever encounter again one that was true himself and believed in you"—

Here Matty, who had never been destitute of feeling, and who, in her heart, was fond of Colin in her way, and had a kind of understanding of him, so far as she could go,

fell into such an outburst of natural tears as disarmed the mistress, who faltered and stopped short, and had hard ado to retain some appearance of severity in sight of this weeping, for which she was not prepared. Colin's mother understood truth, and in an abhorring, indignant, resentful way, believed that there was falsehood in the world. But how truth and falsehood were mingled—how the impulses of nature might have a little room to work even under the fictions of art, or the falseness of society—was a knowledge unimagined by the simple woman. She began to think she had done Matty injustice when she saw her tears.

"Oh, Mrs. Campbell, I know how good he is! I—I never knew any one like him. How could I help— But, indeed—indeed, I never meant any harm!" cried Matty, ingeniously taking advantage of the truth of her own feelings, as far as they went, to disarm her unconscious and single-minded judge. The mistress looked at her with puzzled but pitiful eyes.

"It would be poor comfort to him to say you never meant it," she said; and in the pause that followed, Matty had begun to recollect that it was a long time since the dressing-bell rung, though she still had her face hid on the table, and the tears were not dried from her cheeks. "And things may turn out more merciful than they look like," said the mistress, with a heavy sigh and a wistful smile. Perhaps it occurred to her that the gratitude of the Franklands might go so far as to bestow upon Colin the woman he loved. "I'll no keep you longer," she continued, laying her tender hand for a moment on Matty's head. "God bless you for every kind thought you ever had to my Colin. He's weel worthy of them all," said the wistful mother.

Matty, who did not know what to say, and who, under this touch, felt her own artifice to her heart, and was for a moment disgusted with herself, sprung up in a little agony of shame and remorse, and kissed Mrs. Campbell as she went away. And Colin's mother went back to her son's room to find him asleep, and sat down by his side, to ponder in herself whether this and that might not still be possible. Love and happiness were physicians in whom the simple woman had a confidence unbounded. If they came smiling hand in hand to Colin's pillow, who could tell what miracle of gladness might yet fall from the tender heavens?

CHAPTER XXI.

But, though Mrs. Campbell's heart relented toward Matty, and was filled with vague hopes which centred in her, it was very hard to find out what Colin's thoughts were on the same subject. He scarcely spoke of the Franklands at all, and never named or referred to the ladies of the house. When his mother spoke, with natural female wiles to tempt him into confidence, of special inquiries made for him, Colin took no notice of the inference. She even went so far as to refer specially to Miss Matty with no greater effect. "There's one in the house as anxious as me," said the mistress, with tender exaggeration, as she smoothed his pillow and made her morning inquiries; but her son only smiled faintly and shook his head with an almost imperceptible movement of incredulity. He asked no questions, showed no pleasure at the thought, but lay most of the day in a silence which his mother could find no means of breaking, even now and then, for a moment. The first horror, the first resistance had gone out of Colin's mind; but he lay asking himself inevitable questions, facing the great problem for which he could find no solution, which no man has been able to explain. Had the thoughts of his mind been put into words, the chances are that to most people who have never themselves come to such a trial, Colin would have seemed a blasphemer or an infidel. But he was neither the one nor the other, and was indeed incapable by nature either of scepticism or of profanity. The youth had been born of a sternly-believing race, which recognized in all God's doings an eternal right, beyond justice and beyond reason,—a right to deal with them and theirs as he might please; but Colin himself was of the present age, and was fully possessed by all those cravings after understanding and explanation which belong to the time. Without any doubt of God, he was arrested by the wonderful mystery of Providence, and stood questioning, in the face of the unanswering silence, "Why?" The good God, the God of the Gospels, the Father of our Lord, was the divine Ruler whom Colin recognized in his heart; but the young man longed and struggled to find reasonableness, coherence, any recognizable,

comprehensible cause, for the baffling arrangements and disarrangements, the mysterious inequalities and injustices of life. He wanted to trace the thread of reason which God kept in his own hand; he wanted to make out why the Father who loved all should dispense so unequally, so differently, his gifts to one and another. This awful question kept him silent for days and nights; he could not make anything of it. Social inequalities, which speculatists fret at, had not much disturbed Colin. It had not yet occurred to him that wealth or poverty made much difference; but why the life of one should be broken off incomplete and that of another go on,—why the purposes of one should end in nothing,—why his hopes should be crushed and his powers made useless, while another flourished and prospered, confounded him, in the inexperience of his youth. And neither heaven nor earth gave him any answer. The Bible itself seemed to append moral causes which were wanting in his circumstances to the perennial inequalities of existence. It spoke of the wicked great in power, flourishing like the green bay-tree, and of the righteous oppressed and suffering for righteousness' sake, which was, in its way, a comprehensible statement of the matter. But the facts did not agree in Colin's case. Harry Frankland could not, by any exertion of dislike, be made to represent the wicked, nor was Colin, in his own thinking, better than his neighbor. They were two sons of one Father, to whom that Father was behaving with the most woful, the most extraordinary partiality, and nothing in heaven or earth was of half so much importance as to prove the proceedings of the Father of all to be everlastingly just and of sublime reason. What did it mean? This was what Colin was discussing with himself as he lay on his bed. It was not wonderful that such thoughts should obliterate the image of Miss Matty. When she came into his mind at all, he looked back upon her with a pensive sweetness, as on somebody he had known a lifetime before. Sterner matters had now taken the place of the light love and hopes of bountiful and lavish youth. The hopes had grown few, and the abundance changed into poverty. If the Author of the change had chosen to reveal some reason in it, the young soul thus stopped short in its way could have consented that all was well.

And then Lady Frankland came every day to pay him a visit of sympathy, and to express her gratitude. "It is such a comfort to see him looking so much better!" Lady Frankland said; "Harry would like so much to come and sit with you, dear Mr. Campbell. He could read to you, you know, when you feel tired; I am sure nothing he could do would be too much to show his sense of your regard"—

At which words Colin raised himself up.

"I should be much better pleased," said Colin, "if you would not impute to me feelings which I don't pretend to. It was no regard for Mr. Frankland that induced me"—

"Oh, indeed! I know how good you are," said Harry's mother, pressing his hand, "always so generous, and disposed to make light of your own kindness; but we all know very well, and Harry knows, that there is many a brother who would not have done so much. I am sure I cannot express to you a tenth part of what I feel. Harry's life is so precious!" said my lady, with a natural human appreciation of her own concerns, and unconscious, unintentional indifference to those of others. "The eldest son, —and Sir Thomas has quite commenced to rely upon him for many things—and I am sure I don't know what I should do without Harry to refer to," Lady Frankland continued, with a little smile of maternal pride and triumph. When she came to this point, it chanced to her to catch a side-glimpse of Mrs. Campbell's face. The mistress sat by her son's bedside, pale, with her lips set close, and her eyes fixed upon the hem of her apron, which she was folding and refolding in her hands. She did not say anything, nor give utterance in any way to the dumb remonstrance and reproach with which her heart was bursting; but there was something in her face which imposed silence upon the triumphant, prosperous woman beside her. Lady Frankland gave a little gasp of mingled fright and compunction. She did not know what to say to express her full sense of the service which Colin had done her; and there was nothing strange in her instinctive feeling that she, a woman used to be served and tended all her life, had a natural claim upon other people's services. She was very sorry, of course, about Mr. Campbell; if any exertion of hers could have cured

him, he would have been well in half an hour. But, as it was, it appeared to her rather natural than otherwise that the tutor should suffer and that her own son should be saved.

"I felt always secure about Harry when you were with him," she said, with an involuntary artifice. "He was so fond of you, Mr. Campbell,—and I always felt that you knew how important his safety was, and how much depended"—

"Pardon me," said Colin,—he was angry in his weakness at her pertinacity. "I have no right to your gratitude. Your son and I have no love for each other, Lady Frankland. I picked him out of the canal, not because I thought of the importance of his life, but because I had seen him go down, and should have felt myself a kind of murderer, had I not tried to save him. That is the whole. Why should I be supposed to have any special regard for him? Perhaps," said Colin, whose words came slowly and whose voice was interrupted by his weakness,—"I would have given my life with more comfort for any other man."

"Oh, Mr. Campbell! don't be so angry and bitter. After all, it was not our fault," said Lady Frankland, with a wondering offence and disappointment, and then she hurriedly changed her tone, and began to congratulate his mother on his improved looks.

"I am so glad to see him looking so much better! There were some people coming here," said my lady, faltering a little; "we would not have them come, so long as he was so ill. Neither Harry nor any of us could have suffered it. We had sent to put them off; but now that he is so much better"—said Lady Frankland, with a voice which was half complaint and half appeal. She thought it was rather ill-tempered of the mother and son to make so little response.

"When I almost asked their permission!" she said, with a little indignation, when she had gone down-stairs; "but they seem to think they should be quite masters, and look as black as if we had done them an injury. Send to everybody, and say it is to be on Wednesday, Matty; for Henry's interests must not be neglected." *It* was a ball, for which Lady Frankland had sent out her invitations some time before the accident; for Harry Frankland was to ask the suffrages of the electors of Earle at the approaching election. "I don't mean to be ungrateful to Mr. Campbell," said the lady of Wodensbourne, smoothing those ruffled plumes. "I am sure nobody can say I have not been grateful; but at the same time, I can't be expected to sacrifice my own son." Such were the sentiments with which Lady Frankland came down-stairs. As for the other mother, it would be hard to describe what was in her mind. In the bitterness of her heart, she was angry with the God who had no pity upon her. If Harry Frankland's life was precious, what was Colin's? and the mistress, in her anguish, made bitter comparisons, and cried out wildly with a woman's passion. Down-stairs, in the fine rooms, which her simple imagination filled with splendor, they would dance and sing unconcerned, though her boy's existence hung trembling in the balance; and was not Heaven itself indifferent, taking no notice? She was glad that twilight was coming on to conceal her face, and that Colin, who lay very silent, did not observe her. And so, while Lady Frankland, feeling repulsed and injured, managed to escape partially from the burden of an obligation which was too vast to be borne, and returned to the consideration of her ball, the two strangers kept silence in the twilight chamber, each dumbly contending with doubts that would not be overcome, and questions which could not be answered. What did God mean by permitting this wonderful, this incomprehensible difference between the two? But the great Father remained silent and made no reply. The days of revelation and explanation were over. For one, joy and prosperity; for another, darkness and the shadow of death,—plain facts not to be misconceived or contested—and in all the dumb heavens and silent, observant earth no wisdom nor knowledge which could tell the reason why.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Ay, I heard of the accident. No that I thought anything particular of that. You're no the kind of callant, nor come of the kind of race, to give in to an accident. I came for my own pleasure. I hope I'm old enough to ken what pleases myself. Take your dinner, callant, and leave me to mind my business. I could do that much before you were born."

It was Lauderdale who made this answer

to Colin's half-pleased, half-impatient, questioning. The new-comer sat, gaunt and strange, throwing a long shadow over the sick-bed, and looking, with a suppressed emotion, more pathetic than tears, upon the tray which was placed on a little table by Colin's side. It was a sad sight enough. The young man, in the flush and beauty of his youth, with his noble physical development, and the eager soul that shone in his eyes, lay helpless, with an invalid's repast before him, for which he put out his hand with a languid movement, like a sick child. Lauderdale himself looked haggard and careworn. He had travelled by night, and was unshaven and untrimmed, with a wild gleam of exhaustion and hungry anxiety in his eyes.

"Whatever the reason may be, we're real glad to see you," said Mrs. Campbell. "If I could have wished for anything to do Colin good more than he's getting, it would have been you. But he's a great deal better,—a wonderful deal better; you would not know him for the same creature that he was when I came here; and I'm in great hopes he'll no need to be sent away for the rest of the winter, as the doctor said," said the sanguine mother, who had reasoned herself into hope. She looked with wistful inquiry as she spoke into Lauderdale's eyes, trying hard to read there what was the opinion of the new-comer. "It would be an awfu' hard thing for me to send him away by himsel', and him no well," said the mistress, with a hope that his friend would say that Colin's looks did not demand such a proceeding, but that health would come back to him with the sweet air of the Holy Loch.

"I heard of that," said Lauderdale, "and, to tell the truth, I'm tired of staying in one place all my life mysel'. If a man is to have no more good of his ain legs than if he were a vegetable, I see no good in being a man; it would save an awfu' deal of trouble to turn a cabbage at once. So I'm thinking of taking a turn about the world as long as I'm able; and if Colin likes to go with me"—

"Which means, mother, that he has come to be my nurse," said Colin, whose heart was climbing into his throat; "and here I lie like a log, and will never be able to do more than say thanks. Lauderdale"—

"Whisht, callant," said the tender giant, who stood looking down upon Colin with eyes which would not trust themselves to answer the mother's appealing glances; "I'm terrible fatigued with my life, and no able to take the trouble of arguing the question. Not that I consent to your proposition, which has a fallacy on the face of it; for it would be a bonnie-like thing to hear you say thanks either to your mother or me. Since I've been in my situation,—which, maybe, I'll tell you more about by and by, now that my mouth's opened,—I've saved a little siller, a hundred pounds, or maybe mair," said the philosopher, with a momentary smile, "and I see no reason why I shouldna have my bit holiday as well as other folk. I've worked long for it." He turned away just then, attracted by a gleam of sunshine at the window, his companion thought, and stood looking out, disposing as he best could of a little bitter moisture that had gathered in the deep corners of his eyes. "It'll no be very joyful when it comes," he said to himself, with a pang of which nobody was aware, and stood forming his lips into an inaudible whistle to conceal how they quivered. He, too, had built high hopes upon this young head which was now lying low. He had said to himself, with the involuntary bitterness of a mind disappointed and forlorn, that here at least was a life free from all shadows,—free from the fate that seemed to follow all who belonged to himself,—through whom he might again reconcile himself to Providence, and reconnect himself with existence. As he stood now, with his back to Colin, Lauderdale was again going over the burning ploughshares, enduring the fiery ordeal. Once more his unselfish hope was going out in darkness. When he returned to them, his lips had steadied into the doleful turn of a familiar air, which was connected in Colin's mind with many an amusing and many a tender recollection. Between the two people who were regarding him with love and anguish so intense, the sick youth burst into pleasant laughter,—laughter which had almost surprised the bystanders into helpless tears,—and repeated, with firmer breath than Lauderdale's, the fragment of his favorite air.

"He never gets beyond that bar," said Colin. "It carries me back to Glasgow, and all the old days. We used to call it Lauderdale's pibroch. Give me my dinner, mother. I don't see what I should grumble about as long as you and he are by me. Help me to

get up, old fellow," the young man said, holding out his hands, and ate his invalid meal cheerfully, with eager questions about all his old companions, and bursts of passing laughter, which to the ears of his friend were more terrible than so many groans. As for the mistress, she had become by this time accustomed to connect together those two ideas of Colin and a sick-bed, the conjunction of which was as yet misery to Lauderdale; and she was glad in her boy's pleasure, and took trembling hope from every new evidence of his unbroken spirit. Before long the old current of talk had flowed into its usual channel; and, but for the strange, novel circumstances which surrounded them, one at least of the party might have forgotten for the moment that they were not in the pleasant parlor of Ramore; but that one did not see his own countenance, its eloquent brightness, its flashes of sudden color, and the shining of its too brilliant eyes.

But there could not be any doubt that Colin improved from that moment. Lauderdale had secured a little lodging in the village, from which he came every morning to the "callant," in whom his disappointed manhood, too careless of personal good, too meditative and speculative for any further ambition on his own account, had fixed his last hopes. He even came, in time, after he had accustomed himself to Colin's illness, to share, by moments, in the mistress's hopes. When Colin at last got up from his bed it was Lauderdale's arm he leant on. That was an eventful day to the little anxious group in the sick-chamber, whose hopes sometimes leaped to certainty,—whose fears, with an intuition deeper still, sometimes fell to the other extreme, and were hushed in the silence of an anguish too deep to be fathomed, from which thought itself drew back. It was a bright winter day, with symptoms of spring in the air, when the young patient got up from his weary bed. Colin made very light of his weakness in the rising tide of his spirits. He faltered across the room upon Lauderdale's arm, to look out again, as he said, upon the world. It was an unfortunate moment for his renewal of acquaintance with the bright outside sphere of ordinary life, which had passed on long ago, and forgotten Colin. The room in which they had placed him when his illness began was one of the best rooms in the house, and looked out upon the terrace and the big holly-trees which Colin knew so well. It was the morning of the day on which Lady Frankland's ball was to take place, and symptoms of excitement and preparation were apparent. Immediately in front of the window, when Colin looked out, Miss Matty was standing in animated talk with her cousin. They had been loitering about, as people do in the morning about a country-house, with no particular occupation,—for the sun was warm, though it was still only the end of January,—and Matty was at the moment engaged in indicating some special designs of her own, which were involved in Lady Frankland's alterations in the flower-garden, for Harry's approval. She had, indeed, just led him by the sleeve into the midst of the half-completed design, and was describing circles round him with the walking-stick which she had taken out of his hand for the purpose, as Colin stood tremulous and uncertain by the window, looking out. Nobody could look brighter than Miss Matty; nobody more happy than the heir of Wodensbourne. If the sick man had entertained any hope that his misfortune threw a sympathetic shadow over them, he must now have been undeceived very summarily. Colin, however, bore the trial without flinching. He looked at them as if they were miles or ages away, with a strange smile, which did not seem to the anxious spectators to have any bitterness in it. But he made no remark until he had left the window, and taken his place on the sofa which had been arranged for him by the fire. Then he smiled again, without looking at any one, with abstract eyes, which went to the hearts of his attendants. "How far off the world seems!" said Colin. "I feel as if I ought to be vexed by that paltry scene on the terrace. Don't you think so, mother? But I am not vexed, no more than if it was a picture. I wonder what it means?"

"Eh, Colin, my man, it means you're getting strong and no heeding about them and their vanities!" cried the mistress, whose indignant eyes were full of tears; but Colin only shook his head and smiled, and made no reply. *He* was not indignant. He did not seem to care or be interested one way or another, but, as a spectator might have done, mused on the wonderful contrast, and asked himself what God could mean by it?—a question which there was no one to answer.

Later the curate came to visit him, as indeed he had done several times before, praying out of his well-worn prayer-book by Colin's bedside in a way which at first scandalized the mistress, who had, however, become used to him by this time. "It's better to speak out of a book than to speak nonsense," Mrs. Campbell had said; "but eh, Colin, it's awfu' to think that a man like that hasna a word out of his ain heart to make intercession for his fellow-creatures when they're in trouble." However, the curate was kind, and the mother was speedily mollified. As for that excellent clergyman himself, he did not at all understand the odd company in which he found himself when he looked from Colin, of whom he knew most, to the mother with her thoughtful eyes, and to the gaunt, gigantic friend, who looked upon everything in a speculative way of which the curate had an instinctive suspicion. To-day Colin's visitor was more instructive and hortatory than was at all usual for him. He spoke of the mercy of God, which had so far brought the patient toward recovery, and of the motives for thankfulness; to which Mrs. Campbell assented with silent tears.

"Yes," said Colin; and there was a little pause that surprised the curate. "It is comfortable to be better," said the patient; "but it would be more than comfortable if one could but know, if one could but guess, what meaning God has in it all. There is Frankland down-stairs with his cousin, quite well," said Colin. "I wonder does he ever ask himself why? When one is on the wrong side of the contrast, one feels it more, I suppose." The curate had passed Harry Frankland before he came up-stairs, and had, perhaps, been conscious in his own mind of a momentary personal comparison and passing wonder, even at the difference between his own lot and that of the heir of Wodensbourne. But he had thought the idea a bad one, and crushed it at once; and Colin's thought, though more justifiable, was of the same description, and demanded instant extinction.

"You don't grudge him his good fortune, I am sure; and then we know there must be inequalities in this life," said the curate. "It is very mysterious, but nothing goes without compensation; and then we must always remember that 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,'" said the good clergyman. "You are young to have so much suffering; but you can always take comfort in that."

"Then you mean me to think that God does not love Harry Frankland," said Colin, "and makes a favorite of me in this gloomy way? Do you really think so?—for I cannot be of that opinion, for my part."

"My dear Mr. Campbell," said the curate, "I am very much grieved to hear you speaking like this. Did not God give up his own Son to sufferings of which we have no conception? Did not he endure"—

"It was for a cause," said Colin. The young man's voice fell, and the former bitterness came back upon him. "He suffered for the greatest reason, and knew why; but we are in the dark, and know nothing; why is it? One with all the blessings of life—another stripped, impoverished, brought to the depths, and no reason in it, no occasion, no good!" said Colin, in the momentary outcry of his wonder and passion. He was interrupted, but not by words of sacred consolation. Lauderdale was sitting behind, out of the way, humming to himself, in a kind of rude chant, out of a book he held in his hand. Nobody had been taking any notice of him; for it was his way. Now his voice rose and broke in, in an uncouth swell of sound, not unharmonious with the rude verse,

> "Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs not to make reply,
> Theirs but to do and die,"

said Lauderdale, with a break of strong emotion in his voice; and he got up and threw down the book, and came forward into the little circle. It was the first time that he had intimated by so much as a look his knowledge of anything perilous in Colin's illness. Now he came and stood opposite him, leaning his back against the wall. "Callant," said the strong man, with a voice that sounded as if it were blown about and interrupted by a strong wind, "if I were on a campaign, the man I would envy would be him that was chosen by his general for the forlorn hope,—him that went first, and met the wildest of the battle. Do you mean to tell me you're no ready to follow when he puts the colors in your hand?"

PART VIII.—CHAPTER XXIII.

It was for about six weeks altogether that the mistress of Ramore remained Sir Thomas Frankland's guest. For half of that time Lauderdale, too, tall and gaunt and grim, strode daily over the threshold of Wodensbourne. He never broke bread, as he himself expressed it, nor made the slightest claim upon the hospitality of the stranger's house. On the contrary, he declined steadily every advance of friendship that was made to him with a curious Scotch pride, extremely natural to him, but odd to contemplate from the point of view at which the Franklands stood. They asked him to dinner or to lunch as they would have asked any other stranger who happened to come in their way; but Lauderdale was far too self-conscious to accept such overtures. He had come uninvited, an undesired, perhaps unwelcome, visitor; but not for the world would the philosopher have taken advantage of his position, as Colin's friend, to procure himself the comfort of a meal. Not if he had been starving, would he have shared Colin's dinner, or accepted the meat offered him at the luxurious table below. "Na, na! I came without asking," said Lauderdale; "when they bid me to their feasts, it's no for your sake, callant, or for my sake, but for their own sakes,—for good breeding and good manners, and not to be uncivil. To force a dinner out of civility is every bit as shabby an action as to steal it. I'm no the man to sorn on Sir Thomas for short time or long." And in pursuance of this whimsical idea of independence, Lauderdale went back every evening along the dark country lanes to the little room he had rented in the village, and subdued his reluctant Scotch appetite to the messes of bacon and beans he found there,—which was as severe a test of friendship as could have been imposed upon him. He was not accustomed to fare very sumptuously at home; but the fare of an English cottager is, if more costly, at least as distasteful to an untravelled Scotch appetite as the native porridge and broth of a Scotch peasant could be to his neighbor over the Tweed. The greasy meal filled Lauderdale with disgust; but it did not change his resolution. He lived like a Spartan on the bread which he could eat, and came back daily to his faithful tendance of the young companion who now represented to him almost all that he loved in the world. Colin grew better during these weeks. The air of home which his mother brought with her, the familiar discussions and philosophies with which Lauderdale filled the weary time, gave him a connecting link once more with the old life. And the new life again rose before Colin, fresh and solemn and glorious. Painfully and sharply he had been delivered from his delusions,—those innocent delusions which were virtues. He began to see that, if indeed there ever was a woman in the world for whom it was worth a man's while to sacrifice his existence and individuality, Miss Matty, of all women, was not she. And after this divergence out of his true path,—after this cloud that had come over him, and which looked as though it might swallow him up, it is not to be described how beautiful his own young life looked to Colin, when it seemed to himself that he was coming back to it, and was about to enter once more upon his natural career.

"I wonder how Macdonald will get on at Baliol," he said; "of course he'll get the scholarship. It's no use regretting what cannot be helped; but when a man takes the wrong turning once in his life, do you think he can get into the right road again?" said Colin. He had scarcely spoken the words when a smile gradually stealing over his face, faint and soft like the rising of the moon, intimated to his companions that he had already answered himself. Not only so, but that the elasticity of his youth had delivered Colin from all heavier apprehensions. He was not afraid of the wrong turning he had taken. He was but playing with the question in a kind of tender wantonness. Neither his health nor his lost opportunity gave him much trouble. The tide of life had risen in his heart, and again everything seemed possible; and such being the case, he trifled pleasantly with the dead doubts which existed no longer. "There is a tide in the affairs of men," Colin said to himself, smiling over it; and the two people who were looking at him, whose hearts and whose eyes were studying every change in his face, saw that a new era had begun, and did not know whether to exchange looks of gratulation or to betake themselves to the silence and darkness to shed tears of despair over the false hope.

"When a callant goes a step astray, you mean," said Lauderdale, with a harshness in his voice which sounded contemptuous to Colin,—"goes out of his way a step to gather a flower or the like; a man that takes a wrong turn is altogether a false eemage. Everything in this world is awfu' mysterious," said the philosopher. "I'm no clear in my mind about that wrong turning. According to some theories, there's no such thing in existence. 'All things work together for good.' I would like to know what was in Paul's head when he wrote down that. No to enter into the question of inspiration, the opinion of a man like him is aye worth having; but it's an awfu' mysterious saying to me."

"Eh, but it's true," said the mistress; "you're no to throw ony of your doubts upon Providence. I'll no say but what it's a hard struggle whiles; but if God doesna ken best,—if he's not the wisest and the kindest, I would rather, for my part, come to an end without ony more ado about it. I'm no wanting to live either in earth or heaven if there's ony doubts about him."

"That's aye the way with women," said Lauderdale, reflectively. "They've nae patience for a philosophical question. But the practical argument is no doubt awfu' powerful, and I can say nothing against it. I'm greatly of the same way o' thinking myself. Life's no worth having on less terms, but at the same time"—

"I was speaking only of the Baliol Scholarship," said Colin, with a momentary pettishness; "you are more abstruse than ever, Lauderdale. If there should happen to be another vacancy next year, do you think I've injured myself by neglecting this one! I never felt more disposed for work," said the young man, raising himself out of his chair. It said a great deal for his returning strength that the two anxious spectators allowed him to get up and walk to the window without offering any assistance. The evening was just falling, and Colin looked out upon a gray landscape of leafless trees and misty flats, over which the shadows gathered. He came back again with a little exclamation of impatience. "I hate these dull levels," said the restless invalid; "the earth and the skies are silent here, and have nothing to say. Mother, why do we not go home?" He stood before her for a moment in the twilight, looking, in his diminished bulk and apparently increased height, like a shadow of what he was. Then he threw himself back in his chair with an impatience partly assumed to conceal the weakness of which he was painfully sensible. "Let us go to-morrow," said Colin, closing his eyes. He was in the state of weakness which feels every contradiction an injury, and already had been more ruffled in spirit than he cared to acknowledge by the diversion of the talk from his own individual concerns to a general question so large and so serious. He lay back in his chair, with his eyes closed, and those clouds of brown hair of which his mother was so proud hanging heavily over the forehead which, when it was visible, looked so pale and worn out of its glory of youth. The color of day had all gone out of the whispering, solemn twilight; and when the mistress looked at the face before her, pale, with all its outlines rigid in the gray light, and its eyes closed, it was not wonderful that a shiver went through her heart.

"That was just what I had to speak about, Colin, my man," said Mrs. Campbell, nerving herself for the task before her. "I see no reason myself against it, for I've aye had a great confidence in native air; but your grand doctor that was brought down from London"—

"Do not say anything more. I shall not stay here, mother; it is impossible! I am throwing away my life!" cried Colin, hastily, not waiting to hear her out. "Anybody can teach this boy. As for the Franklands, I have done enough for them. They have no right to detain me. We will go to-morrow," the young man repeated, with the petulance of his weakness; to which Mrs. Campbell did not know how to reply.

"But, Colin, my man," said the mistress, after a pause of perplexity, "it's no *that* I'm meaning. Spring's aye sweet, and it's sweet aboon a' in your ain place, when ye ken every corner to look for a primrose in. I said that to the doctor, Colin; but he wasna of my opinion. A' that was in his mind was the east wind (no that there's much o' that in our country-side; but those English canna tell one airt from another) and the soft weather, and I couldna say but what it was whiles damp," said the candid woman; "and the short and the long is, that he said you were to gang south and no north. I'm no mean-

ing him. If it wasna for your health's sake, which keeps folks anxious, it would sound ower grand to be possible," she continued, with a wistful smile, "and awfu' proud I would be to think of my laddie in Italy"—

"In Italy?" said Colin, with a cry of excitement and surprise; and then they both stopped short, and he looked in his mother's eyes, which would not meet his, and which he could see, hard as she struggled to keep them unseen, were wet and shining with tears. "People are sent to Italy to die," said the young man. "I suppose that is what the doctor thinks, and that is your opinion, my poor mother? and Lauderdale thinks so? Don't say no. No, I can see it in your eyes."

"Oh, Colin, dinna say that! dinna break my heart!" cried the mistress. "I'm telling you every word the doctor said. He said it would be better for you in future,—for your strength, and for getting free of danger in the many hard winters,—dour Scotch winters, frost, and snow, and stormy weather, and you your duty to mind night and day." She made a little pause to get her breath, and smiled upon Colin, and went on hastily, lest she should break down before all was said. "In the many hard winters that you have to look forward to—the lang life that's to come"—

"Lauderdale," said Colin, out of the darkness, "do you hear her saying what she thinks is deception and falsehood? My mother is obliged to tell me the doctor's lie; but it stumbles on her lips. That is not how she would speak of herself. She would say"—

"Callant, hold your peace," said Lauderdale. His voice was so harsh and strange that it jarred in the air, and he rose up with a sudden movement, rising like a tower into the twilight, through which the pleasant reflections from the fire sparkled and played as lightly as if the talk had been all of pleasure. "Be silent, sir!" cried Colin's friend. "How dare you say to me that any word but truth can come out of the mistress's lips? How dare ye"— But here Lauderdale himself came to a sudden pause. He went to the window, as Colin had done, and then came quickly back again. "Because we're a wee concerned and anxious about him, he thinks he may say what he likes," said the philosopher, with a strange, short laugh. "It's the way with such callants. They're kings, and give the laws to us that ken better. You may say what you like, Colin; but you must not name anything that's no true with your mother's name."

It is strange to feel that you are going die. It is stranger still to see your friends, profoundly conscious of the awful news they have to convey, painfully making light of it, and trying to look as if they meant nothing. Colin perceived the signification of his mother's pathetic smiles, of his friend's impatience, of the vigilant watch they kept upon him. He saw that, if perhaps her love kept a desperate spark of hope alight in the mistress' heart, it was desperate, and she put no confidence in it. All this he perceived, with the rapid and sudden perception which comes at such a crisis. Perhaps for a moment the blood went back upon his heart with a suffocating sense of danger, against which he could make no stand, and of an inevitable approaching fate which he could not avoid or flee from. The next minute he laughed aloud. The sound of his laughter was strange and terrible to his companions. The mistress took her boy's hand and caressed it, and spoke to him in the soothing words of his childhood. "Colin, my man,—Colin, my bonnie man," said the mother, whose heart was breaking. She thought his laugh sounded like defiance of God,—defiance of the approaching doom; and such a fear was worse even than the dread of losing him. She kept his reluctant fingers in hers, holding him fast to the faith and the resignation of his home. As for Lauderdale, he went away out of sight, struggling with a hard sob which all his strength could not restrain; and it was in the silence of this moment that Colin's laugh, more faintly, more softly, with a playful sound that went to his heart, echoed again into the room.

"Don't hold me, mother," he said: "I could not run away from you if I would. You think I don't take my discovery as I ought to do? If it is true," said Colin, grasping his mother's hand, "you will have time enough to be miserable about me after; let us be happy as long as we can. But I don't think it is true. I have died and come alive again. I am not going to die any more just now," said Colin, with a smile which was more than his mother could bear, and his eyes so fixed upon her, that her efforts to swallow the climbing sorrow in her throat

were such as consumed her strength. But even then it was of him and not herself that she thought. "I wasna meaning,—I wasna saying," she tried to articulate in her broken voice; and then at intervals, "A' can be borne—a' can be borne—that doesna go against the will of God. Oh, Colin, my ain laddie! we maun a' die; but we must not rebel against him!" cried the mistress. A little more, and even she, though long-enduring as love could make her, must have reached the limits of her strength; but Colin, strangely enough, was noway disposed for solemnity, nor for seriousness. He was at the height of the rebound, and disposed to carry his nurses with him to that smiling mountain-top from which death and sorrow had dispersed like so many mists and clouds.

"Come to the window, and look out," said Colin: "take my arm, mother; it feels natural to have you on my arm. Look here—there are neither hills nor waters, but there are always stars about. I don't mean to be discouraged," said the young man,—he had to lean against the window to support himself; but, all the same, he supported her, keeping fast hold of the hand on his arm,—"I don't mean to be discouraged," said Colin, "nor to let you be discouraged. I have been in the valley of the shadow of death; but I have come out again. It does not matter to me what the doctor says, or what Lauderdale says, or any other of my natural enemies. You and I, mother, know better," he said; "I am not going to die." The two stood at the window, looking up to the faint stars, two faces cast in the same mould,—one distraught with a struggling of hope against knowledge, against experience; the other radiant with a smile of youth. "I am not quite able to walk over the Alps, at present," said Colin, leading the mistress back to her chair; "but for all that, let us go to Italy, since the doctor says so. And, Lauderdale, come out of the dark and light the candles, and don't talk any more nonsense. We are going to have a consultation about the ways and means. I don't know how it is to be done," said Colin, gayly, "since we have not a penny, nor has anybody belonging to us; but still, since you say so, mother, and the doctor and Lauderdale"—

The mistress, all trembling and agitated, rose at this moment to help Lauderdale, who had come, forward without saying anything, to do the patient's bidding. "You'll no be angry?" said Mrs. Campbell, under breath: "it's a' his spirits; he means nothing but love and kindness." Lauderdale met her eye with a countenance almost as much disturbed as her own.

"Me angry!" said Colin's friend; "he might have my head for a football, if that would please him." The words were said in an undertone which sounded like a suppressed growl; and as such Colin took the little clandestine exchange of confidence.

"Is he grumbling, mother?" said the object of their cares. "Never mind; he likes to grumble. Now come to the fire, both of you, and talk. They are oracles, these great doctors; they tell you what you are to do without telling you how to do it. Must I go to Italy in a balloon?" said Colin. "After all, if it were possible, it would be worth being ill for," said the young man, with a sudden illumination in his eyes. He took the management of affairs into his own hands for the evening, and pointed out to them where they were to sit with the despotism of an invalid. "Now we look comfortable," said Colin, "and are prepared to listen to suggestions. Lauderdale, your mind is speculative; do you begin."

It was thus that Colin defeated the gathering dread and anguish which, even in the face of his apparent recovery, closed more and more darkly round him; and as what he did and said did not arise from any set purpose or conscious intention, but was the mere expression of instinctive feeling, it had a certain inevitable effect upon his auditors, who brightened up, in spite of themselves and their convictions, under his influence. When Colin laughed, instead of feeling inclined to sob or groan over him, even Lauderdale, after a while, cleared up, too, into a wistful smile, and as for the mistress, her boy's confidence came to her like a special revelation. She saw it was not assumed, and her heart rose. "When a young creature's appointed to be taken, the Lord gives him warning," she said in secret; "but my Colin has nae message in himself;" and her tender soul was charmed by the visionary consolation. It was under the influence of the same exhilaration that Lauderdale spoke.

"I've given up my situation," he said. "No but what it was a very honorable situation,

and no badly remunerated; but a man tires of anything that's aye the same day by day. I've been working hard a' my life; and it's in the nature of a man to be craving. I'm going to Eetaly for my own hand," said Lauderdale; "no on your account, callant. I've had enough of the prose, and now's the time for a bit poetry. No that I undertake to write verses, like you. If he has not me to take care of him, he'll flee into print," said the philosopher, reflectively. "It would be a terrible shock to me to see our first prize-man, the most distinguished student, as the principal himself said, coming out in a book with lines to Eetaly, and verses about vineyards and oranges. That kind of thing is a' very well for the callants at Oxford and Cambridge; but there's something more expected from one of *us*," said Lauderdale. "I'm going to Eetaly, as I tell you, callant, as long as there's a glimmer of something like youth left in me, to get a bit poetry into my life. You and me will take our knapsacks on our backs and go off together. I have a trifle in the bank,—a hundred pounds, or maybe mair: I couldn't say as to a shilling or twa. If I'm speculative, as you say, I'm no without a turn for the practical," he continued, with some pride; "and everything's awfu' cheap when you know how to manage. This curate callant,—he has no a great deal of sense, nor ony philosophical judgment, that I can see; and as for theology, he doesna understand what it means; but he does not seem to me to be deficient in other organs," said the impartial observer, "such as the heart, for example; and he's been about the world, and understands about inns and things. Every living creature has its use in this life. I wouldna say he was good for very much in the way of direct teaching from the pulpit; but he's been awfu' instructive to me."

"And you mean me to save my life at your cost?" said Colin. "This is what I have come to,—at your cost, or at my father's, or by somebody's charity? No; I'll go home and sit in an easy-chair, like poor Hugh Carlyle; and, mother, you'll take care"—

When the sick man's fitful spirits thus yielded again, his mother was near to soothe him with a better courage. Again she held his hands, and said, "Colin, my man,—Colin, my bonnie man," with the voice of his childhood. "You'll come back hale and strong to pay a'body back the trouble," said the mistress, while Lauderdale proceeded unmoved, without seeming to hear what Colin said.

"They're a mystery to me, those English priests," said the meditative Scotchman. "They're not to call ignorant, in the general sense; but they're awfu' simple in their ways. To think of a man in possession of his faculties reading a verse, or maybe a chapter, out of the Bible, which is very near as mysterious as life itself to the like of me, and then discoursing about the church and the lessons appointed for this day or that. It's a grand tether, that prayer-book, though. Yon kind of callant, so long as he keeps by that, he's safe in a kind of a way; but he knows nothing about what's doing outside his printed walls, and when he hears suddenly a' the stir that's in the world, he loses his head altogether, and takes to 'Essays and Reviews,' and that description of literature. But he's awful instructive, as I was saying, in the article of inns and steamboats. Not to say that he's a grand Italian scholar, as far as I can understand, and reads Dante in the original. It's a wonderful thought to realize the like of that innocent reading Dante. You and me, Colin," said Lauderdale, with a sudden glow in his eyes, "will take the poets by the hand for once in our lives. What you were saying about cost was a wonderful sensible saying for yours. When the siller's done, we'll work our way home; it's a pity you have no voice to speak of, and I canna play the—guitar is't they call it?" said the philosopher, with a quaint grimace. He was contemptuous of the lighter arts, as was natural to his race and habits, and once more Colin's laugh sounded gayly through the room which, for many weeks, had known little laughter. They discussed the whole matter, half playfully, half seriously, as they sat over the fire, growing eager about it as they went on. Lauderdale's hundred pounds "or more" was the careful hoarding of years. He had saved it as poor Scotchmen are reported to save, by minute economies, unsuspected by richer men. But he was ready to spend his little fortune with the composure of a millionnaire. "And myself after it, if that would make it more effectual," he said to himself, as he went back in the darkness to his little lodging in the village. Let it not be supposed, however, that any idea of self-sacrifice was in the mind of Lauderdale. On

the contrary, he contemplated this one possible magnificence of his life with a glow of sweet satisfaction and delight. He was willing to expend it all upon Colin, if not to save him, at least to please him. That was *his* pleasure, the highest gratification of which he was capable in the circumstances. He made his plans with the liberality of a prince, without thinking twice about the matter, though it was all the wealth he had in the world which he was about to lavish freely, for Colin's sake.

"I don't mean to take Lauderdale's money; but we'll arrange it somehow," said Colin; "and then for the hard winters you speak of, mother, and the labor night and day." He sent her away with a smile; but when he had closed the door of his own apartment, which now, at length, he was well enough to have to himself without the attendance of any nurse, the light went out of the young man's face. After they were both gone, he sat down and began to think; things did not look so serene, so certain, so infallible when he was alone. He began to think, What if, after all, the doctor might be right? What if it were death and not life that was written against his name? The thought brought a little thrill to Colin's heart, and then he set himself to contemplate the possibility. His faith was shadowy in details, like that of most people; his ideas about heaven had shifted and grown confused from the first vague vision of beatitude, the crowns and palms and celestial harps of childhood. What was that other existence into which, in the fulness of his youth, he might be transported ere he was aware? *Then*, at least, must be the solution of all the difficulties that crazed the minds of men; *then*, at least, nearer to God, there must be increase of faculty, elevation of soul. Colin looked it in the face, and the Unknown did not appall him; but through the silence he seemed already to hear the cry of anguish which would go up from one homely house under the unanswering skies. It had been his home all his life: what would it be to him in the event of that change, which was death, but not destruction? Must he look down from afar off,—from some cold, cruel distance,—upon the sorrow of his friends, himself being happy beyond reach, bearing no share in the burden? Or might he, according to a still harder imagination, be with them, beside them, but unable by word or look, by breath or touch, to lift aside even for a moment the awful veil, transparent to him, but to them heavy and dark as night, which drops between the living and the dead? It was when his thoughts came to this point that Colin withdrew, faint and sick at heart, from the hopeless inquiry. He went to his rest, saying his prayers, as he said them at his mother's knee, for Jesus' sake. Heaven and earth swam in confused visions round the brain which was dizzy with the encounter of things too mysterious, too dark to be fathomed. The only thing in earth or heaven of which there seemed to be any certainty was the sole Existence which united both, in whose name Colin said his prayers.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Miss Matty Frankland all this time had not been without her trials. They were trials as unlike Colin's as possible, but not without some weight and poignancy of their own, such as might naturally belong to the secondary heartaches of a woman who was far from being destitute either of sense and feeling, and yet was at the same time a little woman of the world. In the first place, she was greatly aggravated that Harry, who, on the whole, seemed to be her fate, an inevitable necessity, should allow himself to be picked out of a canal at the hazard of another man's life. Harry was, on the whole, a very good fellow, and was not apt to fall into an inferior place among his equals, or show himself less manful, courageous, or fortunate than other people. But it wounded Matty's pride intensely to think that she might have to marry a man whose life had been twice saved, all the more as it was not a fault with which he could be reasonably upbraided. And then, being a woman, it was impossible for her to refrain from a little natural involuntary hero-worship of the other, who was not only the hero of these adventures, but her own chivalrous adorer to boot,—perhaps the only man in the world who had suffered his life to be seriously affected by her influence. Not only so; but at the bottom Miss Matty was fond of Colin, and looked upon him with an affectionate, caressing regard, which was not love, but might very easily bear the aspect of love by moments, especially when its object was in a position of special interest. Between these two sentiments the young lady was kept in a

state of harass and worry, disadvantageous both to her looks and her temper,—a consciousness of which reacted in its turn upon her feelings. She put it all down to Harry's score when, looking in her glass, she found herself paler than usual. "I wonder how he could be such an ass!" she said to herself at such periods, with a form of expression unsuitable for a boudoir; and then her heart would melt toward his rival. There were some moments when she felt, or imagined she felt, the thraldom of society, and uttered to herself sighs and sneers, half false and half true, about the "gilded chains," etc., which bound her to make her appearance at Sir Thomas's dinner-party, and to take an active part in the ball. All this conflict of sentiment was conscious, which made matters worse; for all the time Matty was never quite clear of the idea that she was a humbug, and even in her truest impulse of feeling kept perpetually finding herself out. If Colin had been able to appear down-stairs, her position would have been more and more embarrassing; as it was, she saw, as clearly as any one, that the intercourse which she had hitherto kept up with the tutor must absolutely come to an end now, when he had a claim so much stronger and more urgent on the gratitude of the family. And the more closely she perceived this, the more did Matty grudge the necessity of throwing aside the most graceful of all her playthings. Things might have gone on in the old way for long enough, but for this most unnecessary and perplexing accident, which was entirely Harry's fault. Now she dared not any longer play with Colin's devotion, and yet was very reluctant to give up the young worshipper, who amused and interested and affected her more than any other in her train. With this in her mind, Miss Matty, as may be supposed, was a little fitful in her spirits, and felt herself, on the whole, an injured woman. The ordinary homage of the drawing-room felt stale and unprofitable after Colin's poetic worship; and the wooing of Harry, who felt he had a right to her, and conducted himself accordingly, made the contrast all the more distinct. And in her heart, deep down beyond all impulses of vanity, there lay a woman's pity for the sufferer,—a woman's grateful but remorseful admiration for the man who had given in exchange for all her false coin a most unquestionable heart.

Matty did not suspect the change in Colin's sentiments; perhaps she could not by any effort of her understanding have realized the silent revolution which these few weeks had worked in his mind. She would have been humbled, wounded, perhaps angry, had she known of his disenchantment. But in her ignorance, a certain yearning was in the young lady's mind. She was not reconciled to give him up; she wanted to see him again,—even, so mingled were her sentiments, to try her power upon him again, though it could only be to give him pain. Altogether, the business was complicated to an incredible extent in the mind of Matty, and she had not an idea of the simple manner in which Colin had cut the knot and escaped out of all its entanglements. When the accident was discussed down-stairs, the remarks of the general company were insufferable to the girl who knew more about Colin than any one else did; and the sharpness of her criticism upon their jocular remarks confounded even Lady Frankland, whose powers of observation were not rapid. "My dear, you seem to be losing your temper," said the astonished aunt; and the idea gave Lady Frankland a little trouble. "A woman who loses her temper will never do for Harry," she said in confidence to Sir Thomas. "And poor fellow, he is very ready to take offence since this unfortunate accident. I am sure, I am quite ready to acknowledge how much we owe to Mr. Campbell; but it is very odd that nothing has ever happened to Harry except in his company," said the aggrieved mother. Sir Thomas, for his part, was more reasonable.

"A very lucky thing for Harry," said the baronet. "Nobody else would have gone into that canal after him. I can't conceive how Harry could be such a confounded ass!" Sir Thomas added, with a mortified air. "But as for Campbell, poor fellow, anything that I can do for him— By Jove, Mary, if he were to die, I should never forgive myself!"

On the whole, it will be seen that the agitations occasioned by Colin were not confined to his own chamber. As for Harry, he kept silence on the subject, but did not the less feel the inferior position in which his misfortune had lef thim. He was grateful so far,—that, if he could have persuaded Colin to accept any recompense, or done him any over-

whelming favor, he would have gladly given that evidence of thankfulness. But after the first shock of horror with which he heard of the tutor's danger, it is certain that the mortification of feeling that his life had been saved at the risk of another man's life produced in young Frankland anything but a friendly sentiment. To accept so vast an obligation requires an amount of generosity of which Harry was not capable. The two young men were, indeed, placed in this singular relationship to each other, without the existence of a spark of sympathy between them. Not only was the mind of the saved in a sore and resentful, rather than a grateful and affectionate, state; but even the other, from whom more magnanimity might have been expected, had absolutely no pleasure in thinking that he had saved the life of a fellow-creature. That sweet satisfaction and approval of conscience which is said to attend acts of benevolence did not make itself felt in the bosom of Colin. He was rather irritated than pleased by the consciousness of having preserved Harry Frankland from a watery grave, as the apothecary said. The entire household was possessed by sensations utterly unlike those which it ought to have felt, when, on the day succeeding his consultation with Lauderdale, Colin for the first time came down-stairs. There were still some people in the house giving full occupation to Lady Frankland's hours of hospitality, and Matty's of entertainment; but both the ladies heard in a minute or two after his appearance that Mr. Campbell had been seen going into the library. "Perhaps it would be best if you were to go and speak to him, Matty," said Lady Frankland. "There is no occasion for being too enthusiastic; but you may say that I am very much occupied, or I would have come myself to welcome him. Say anything that is proper, my dear, and I will try and induce Harry to go and shake hands, and make his acknowledgments. Men have such a horror of making a fuss," said the perplexed mother. As for Matty, she went upon her errand with eagerness and a little agitation. Colin was in the library, seated at the table beside Sir Thomas, when she went in. The light was shining full upon him, and it did not subdue the beatings of Matty's contradictory little heart to see how changed he was, and out of caves how deep the eyes looked which had taken new meanings unintelligible to her. She had been, in her secret heart, a little proud of understanding Colin's eyes; and it was humiliating to see the new significations which had been acquired during his sickness, and to which she had no clew. Sir Thomas was speaking when she came in; so Matty said nothing, but came and stood by him for a moment, and gave her hand to Colin. When their eyes met, they were both moved, though they were not in love with each other; and then Matty drew a chair to the other side of the table, and looked remorsefully, pitifully, tenderly, on the man whom she supposed her lover. She was surprised that he did not seek her eye, or show himself alive to all her movements, as he used to do; and at that moment, for the first time, it occurred to Matty to wonder whether the absolute possession of Colin's heart might not be worth a sacrifice. She was tired of Harry and, to tell the truth, of most other people just then. And the sight of this youth —who was younger than she was, who was so much more ignorant and less experienced than she, and who had not an idea in his head about settlements and establishments, but entertained visions of an impossible life, with incomprehensible aims and meanings in it—had a wonderfully sudden effect upon her. For that instant Matty was violently tempted,—that is to say, she took it into her consideration as actually a question worth thinking of, whether it might not be practicable to accept Colin's devotion, and push him on in the world, and make something of him. She entertained the idea all the more, strangely enough, because she saw none of the old pleadings in Colin's eyes.

"I hope you will never doubt our gratitude, Campbell," said Sir Thomas. "I understand that the doctor has said you must not remain in this climate. Of course you must spend the spring in Nice, or somewhere. It's charming scenery thereabouts. You'll get better directly you get into the air. And in summer, you know, there's no place so good as England,—you must come back here. As for expenses, you shall have a travelling allowance over your salary. Don't say anything; money can never repay"—

"As long as I was Charley's tutor," said Colin, "money was natural. Pardon me,—I can't help the change of circumstances,—there is no money bond between us now,—only kindness," said the young man, with an effort.

"You have all been very good to me since I fell ill. I come to thank you, and to say I must give up"—

"Yes, yes," said Sir Thomas; "but you can't imagine that I will let you suffer for your exertions on my son's behalf, and for the regard you have shown to my family?"

"I wish you would understand," said Colin, with vexation. "I have explained to Lady Frankland more than once. It may seem rude to say so; but there was no regard for your family involved in that act, at least. I was the only one of the party who saw that your son had gone down. I had no wish to go down after him; I can't say I had any impulse, even; but I had seen him, and I should have felt like his murderer if I had not attempted to save him. I am aware it is an ungracious thing to say; but I cannot accept praise which I don't deserve," said Colin, his weakness bringing a hot, sudden color over his face; and then he stopped short, and looked at Sir Thomas, who was perplexed by this interruption, and did not quite know how to shape his reply.

"Well, well," said the baronet; "I don't exactly understand you, and I dare say you don't understand yourself. Most people that are capable of doing a brave action give queer explanations of it. That's what you mean, I suppose. No fellow that's worth anything pretends to fine motives, and so forth. You did it because you could not help it. But that does not interfere with my gratitude. When you are ready to go, you will find a credit opened for you at my bankers, and we must see about letters of introduction and all that; and I advise you, if you're going to Italy, to begin the language at once, if you don't know it. Miss Matty used to chatter enough for six when we were there. I dare say she'd like nothing better than to teach you," said Sir Thomas. He was so much relieved by the possibility of turning over his difficult visitor upon Matty that he forgot the disadvantages of such a proposal. He got up, delighted to escape and to avoid any further remonstrance, and held out his hand to Colin. "Delighted to see you down-stairs again," said the baronet; "and I hope you'll bring your friend to dinner with you to-night. Good-by just now; I have, unfortunately, an engagement"—

"Good-by," said Colin. "I will write to you all about it." And so the good-hearted squire went away, thinking everything was settled. After that it was very strange for the two who had been so much together to find themselves again in the same room, and alone. As for Colin, he did not well know what to say. Almost the last time he had been by Matty's side without any witnesses was the time when he concluded that it was only his life which he was throwing away for her sake. Since that time, what a wonderful change had passed over him! The idea that he had thought her smile, the glance of her eyes, worth such a costly sacrifice, annoyed Colin. But still her presence sent a little thrill through him when they were left alone together. And as for Miss Matty, there was some anxiety in her eyes as she looked at him. What did he mean? Was he taking a desperate resolution to declare his sentiments? or what other reason could there be for his unusual silence? for it never occurred to her to attribute it to its true cause.

"My uncle thinks you have consented to his plan," said Matty; "but I suppose I know what your face means better than he does. Why are you so hard upon us, I wonder? I know well enough that Harry and you never took to each other; but you used to like the rest of us,—or, at least, I thought so," said the little siren. She gave one of her pretty glances at him under her eyelashes, and Colin looked at her across the table candidly, without any disguise. Alas! he had seen her throw that same glance at various other persons, while he stood in the corner of the drawing-room observing everything; and the familiar artillery this time had no effect.

"I have the greatest respect for everybody at Wodensbourne," said Colin; "you did me only justice in thinking so. You have all been very good to me."

"I did not say anything about respect," said Miss Matty, with pouting lips. "We used to be friends, or, at least, I thought so. I never imagined we were to break off into respect so suddenly. I am sure I wish Harry had been a hundred miles away when he came to disturb us all," said the disarmed enchantress. She saw affairs were in the most critical state, and her words were so far true that she could have expressed her feelings best at the moment by an honest fit

of crying. As this was impracticable, Miss Matty tried less urgent measures. "We have caused you nothing but suffering and vexation," said the young lady, dropping her voice and fixing her eyes upon the pattern of the table-cover, which she began to trace with her finger. "I do not wonder that we have become disagreeable to you. But you should not condemn the innocent with the guilty," said Miss Matty, looking suddenly up into his eyes. A touch of agitation, the slightest possible, gave interest to the face on which Colin was looking; and perhaps all the time he had known her she had never so nearly approached being beautiful, as certainly, all the time, she had never so narrowly escaped being true. If things had been with Colin as they once were, the probability is that, moved by her emotion, the whole story of his love would have poured forth at this emergency; and, had it done so, there is a possibility that Matty, carried away by the impulse of the moment, might have awoke next morning the affianced wife of the farmer's son of Ramore. Providence, however, was kinder to the pair. Colin sat on the other side of the table, and perceived that she was putting her little delicate probe into his wound. He saw all the asides and stage directions, and looked at her with a curious, vicarious sense of shame.

Colin, indeed, in his new enlightenment, was hard upon Matty. He thought it was all because she could not give up her power over the victim, whom she intended only to torture, that she had thus taken the trouble to reopen the ended intercourse. He could no more have believed that at this moment, while he was looking at her, such a thing was possible as that Matty might have accepted his love, and pledged her life to him, than he would have believed the wildest nonsense that ever was written in a fairy tale. So the moments passed, while the ignorant mortal sat on the opposite side of the table,—which was a very fortunate thing for both parties. Nevertheless, it was with a certain sense of contempt for him, as, after all, only an ordinary blind male creature, unconscious of his opportunities, mingled with a thrill of excitement, on her own part, natural to a woman who has just escaped a great danger, that Miss Matty listened to what Colin had to say.

"There is neither guilty nor innocent that I know of," said Colin; "you have all been very kind to me. It is very good of you to take the pains to understand me. I don't mean to take advantage of Sir Thomas Frankland's kindness; but I am not such a churl as to fling it back in his teeth as if it were pride alone that made mere fuse it. It is not pride alone," said Colin, growing red, "but a sense of justice; for what I have done has been done by accident. I will write and explain to Sir Thomas what I mean."

"Write and explain?" said Matty. "You have twice said you would write. Do you mean that you are going away?"

"As soon as it is possible," said Colin; and then he perceived that he was speaking with rude distinctness. "Indeed, I have been taking advantage of your kindness too long. I have been a useless member of the household for six weeks at least. Yes, I must go away."

"You speak very calmly," said Matty. She was a little flushed, and there were tears in her eyes. If they had been real tears she would have hidden them carefully; but as they were only half real, she had no objection to let Colin see that she was concealing them. "You are very composed about it, Mr. Campbell. One would think you were going away from a place distasteful to you, or, at least, which you were totally indifferent about. I dare say that is all very right and proper; but I have a good memory, and it appears rather strange to me."

It was altogether a trying situation for Colin. If she had been able to seduce him into a little recrimination, she would have succeeded in dragging the reluctant captive back again into his toils; which, having by this time entirely recovered her senses, was all Miss Matty wanted. Her downcast, tearful eyes, the faltering in her voice, were wonderfully powerful weapons, which the young man was unable to combat by means of mere indifference. Colin, however, being a man of impulses, was never to be calculated on beforehand for any particular line of conduct; and on the present occasion, he entirely overleaped Miss Matty's bounds.

"Yes, it is strange," said Colin, "Perhaps nothing but the sight of Death, who has been staring into my eyes for some time, could have shown me the true state of affairs. I

have uttered a great deal of nonsense since I came to Wodensbourne, and you have listened to it, Miss Frankland, and perhaps rather enjoyed seeing my tortures and my delights. But nothing could come of that; and when Death hangs on behind, everything but love flies before him," said Colin. "It was pleasant sport while it lasted; but everything, except love, comes to an end."

"Except love," said Miss Matty. She was terribly piqued and mortified on the surface, and a little humble and sorrowful within. She had a sense, too, that, for one moment, at the beginning of this interview, she had almost been capable of that sentiment which Colin exalted so highly; and that, consequently, he did her injustice in speaking of it as something with which she had nothing to do. "I remember hearing you talk of *that* sometimes in the midst of what you call nonsense now. If you did not understand yourself, you can't expect that I should have understood you," she went on. To tell the truth, Miss Matty was very near crying. She had experienced the usual injustice of human affairs, and been punished for her vanity just at that moment when she was inclined to do better; and her heart cried out against such cruel usage. This time, however, she kept her tears quite in subjection and did not show them, but only repeated, "You could not expect that I should understand you, if you did not understand yourself."

"No; that is true at least," said Colin, with eyes that strayed beyond her, and had gone off in other regions unknown to Matty. This which had piqued her even at the height of their alliance gave her an excuse for her anger now.

"And when you go off into sentiment, I never understand you," said the young lady. "I will leave *l'incomodo*, as the Italians say. That shall be your first lesson in the language which my uncle says I am to teach you," said the baffled little witch; and she went away with a glance half-spiteful, half-wistful, which had more effect upon Colin than a world of words. He got up to open the door for her, weak as he was, and took her hand and kissed it as she went away. Then Colin took himself laboriously up-stairs, having done his day's work. And so unreasonable was the young man, that Matty's last glance filled his heart with gentler thoughts of the world in general, though he was not in love any longer. "I was not such a fool after all," he said to himself; which was a great consolation. As for Matty, she cried heartily when she got to her room, and felt as if she had lost something. Nor did she recover until about luncheon, when some people came to call, and it was her duty to be entertaining, and relieve Lady Frankland. "I hope you said everything that was proper to Mr. Campbell, my dear," said the lady of the house when lunch was over. And so that chapter came to an end.

CHAPTER XXV.

After this interview, it was strange to meet again the little committee up-stairs, and resume the consideration of ways and means, which Sir Thomas would have settled so summarily. Colin could not help thinking of the difference with a little amusement. He was young enough to be able to dismiss entirely the grave thoughts of the previous night, feeling in his elastic, youthful mind, as he did, something of the fresh influence of the morning, or at least,—for Colin had found out that the wind was easterly, a thing totally indifferent to him in old times,—of the sentiment of the morning, which, so long as heart and courage are unbroken, renews the thoughts and hopes. Money was a necessary evil, to Colin's thinking. So long as there happened to be enough of it for necessary purposes, he was capable of laughing at the contrast between his own utter impecuniosity and the wealth which was only important for its immediate uses. Though he was Scotch, and of a careful, money-making race, this was as yet the aspect which money bore to the young man. He laughed as he leaned back in his easy-chair.

"What Lauderdale makes up by working for years, and what we can't make up by any amount of working, Sir Thomas does with a scrape of his pen," said Colin. "Down-stairs they need to take little thought about these matters, and up here a great deal of thought serves to very little purpose. On the whole, it seems to me that it would be very good for our tempers and for our minds in general if we all had plenty of money," said the young philosopher, still laughing. He was tolerably indifferent on the subject, and able to take it easily. While he spoke, his eye lighted on his mother's face.

who was not regarding the matter by any means so lightly. Mrs. Campbell, on the contrary, was suffering under one of the greatest minor trials of a woman. She thought her son's life depended on this going to Italy, and to procure the means for it there was nothing on earth his mother would not have done. She would have undertaken joyfully the rudest and hardest labor that ever was undertaken by man. She would have put her hands, which indeed were not accustomed to work, to any kind of toil; but with this eager longing in her heart she knew at the same time that it was quite impossible for her to do anything by which she could earn those sacred and precious coins on which her boy's life depended. While Colin spoke, his mother was making painful calculations what she could save and spare, at least, if she could not earn. Colin stopped short when he looked at her; he could not laugh any longer. What was to him a matter of amused speculation was to her life or death.

"There canna but be inequalities in this world," said the mistress, her tender brows still puckered with their baffling calculations. "I'm no envious of ony grandeur, nor of taking my ease, nor of the pleasures of this life. We're awfu' happy at hame in our sma' way when a's weel with the bairns; but it's for their sakes, to get them a' that's good for them! Money's precious when it means health and life," said Mrs. Campbell, with a sigh; "and it's awfu' hard upon a woman when she can do nothing for her ain, and them in need."

"I've known it hard upon a man," said Lauderdale; "there's little difference when it comes to that. But a hundred pounds," he continued, with a delightful consciousness of power and magnificence, "is not a bad sum to begin upon; before that's done, there will be time to think of more. It's none of your business, callant, that I can see. If you'll no come with me, you must even stay behind. I've set my heart on a holiday. A man has a little good of his existence when he does nothing but earn and eat and eat and earn again as I've been doing. I would like to take the play awhile, and feel that I'm living."

When the mistress saw how Lauderdale stretched his long limbs on his chair, and how Colin's face brightened with the look, half sympathetic, half provocative, which usually marked the beginning of a long discussion, she went to the other end of the room for her work. It was Colin's linen which his mother was putting in order, and she was rather glad to withdraw to the other side of the room, and retire within that refuge of needlework, which is a kind of sanctuary for a woman, and in which she could pursue undisturbed her own thoughts. After a while, though these discussions were much in Mrs. Campbell's way, and she was not disinclined in general to take part in them, she lost the thread of the conversation. The voices came to her in a kind of murmur, now and then chiming in with a chance word or two with the current of her own reflections. The atmosphere which surrounded the convalescent had never felt so hopeful as to-day, and the heart of the mother swelled with a sense of restoration, a trust in God's mercy which recently had been dull and faint within her. Restoration, recovery, deliverance—Nature grows humble, tender, and sweet under these influences of heaven. The mistress's heart melted within her, repenting of all the hard thoughts she had been thinking, of all the complaints she had uttered. "It is good for me that I was afflicted," said the Psalmist; but it was not until his affliction was past that he could say so. Anguish and loss make no such confession. The heart, when it is breaking, has enough ado to refrain from accusing God of its miscry, and it is only the inhumanity of human advisers that would adjure it to make spiritual merchandise out of the hopelessness of its pain.

Matters were going on thus in Colin's chamber, where he and his friend sat talking; and the mother at the other end of the room, carefully sewing on Colin's buttons, began to descend out of her heaven of thankfulness, and to be troubled with a pang of apprehension, lest her husband should not see things in the same light as she did, but might, perhaps, demur to Colin's journey as an unwarrantable expense. People at Ramore did not seek such desperate remedies for failing health. Whenever a cherished one was ill, they were content to get "the best doctors," and do everything for him that household care and pains could do; but, failing that, the invalid succumbed into the easy-chair, and when domestic cherishing would serve the purpose no longer, into a submissive grave, without dreaming of those resources

of the rich which might still have prolonged the fading life. Colin of Ramore was a kind father; but he was only a man, as the mistress recollected, and apt to come to different conclusions from an anxious and trembling mother. Possibly he might think this great expense unnecessary, not to be thought of, an injustice to his other children; and this thought disturbed her reflections terribly, as she sat behind their backs examining Colin's wardrobe. At all events, present duty prompted her to make everything sound and comfortable, that he might be ready to encounter the journey without any difficulty on that score; and absorbed in these mingled cares and labors, she was folding up carefully the garments she had done with, and laying them before her in a snowy heap upon the table, when the curate knocked softly at the door. It was rather an odd scene for the young clergyman, who grew more and more puzzled by his Scotch acquaintances the more he saw of them, not knowing how to account for their quaint mixture of homeliness and intelligence, nor whether to address them politely as equals, or familiarly as inferiors. Mrs. Campbell came forward, when he opened the door, with her cordial smile and looks as gracious as if she had been a duchess. "Come away, sir," said the farmer's wife, "we are aye real glad to see you," and then the mistress stopped short; for Henry Frankland was behind the curate, and somehow, the heir of Wodensbourne was not a favorite with Colin's mother. But her discontentment lasted but a moment. "I canna bid ye welcome, Mr. Frankland, to your own house," said the diplomatical woman; "but if it was mine, I would say I was glad to see you." That was how she got over the difficulty. But she followed the two young men toward the fire, when Colin had risen from his easy-chair. She could but judge according to her knowledge, like other people; and she was a little afraid that the man who had taken his love from him, who had hazarded health and, probably, his life, would find little favor in Colin's eyes; and to be anything but courteous to a man who came to pay her a visit, even had he been her greatest enemy, was repugnant to her barbaric-princely Scotch ideas. She followed accordingly, to be at hand and put things straight if they went wrong.

"Frankland was too late to see you to-day when you were down-stairs; so he thought he would come up with me," said the curate, giving this graceful version of the fact that, dragged by himself and pursued by Lady Frankland, Harry had most reluctantly ascended the stair. "I am very glad indeed to hear that you were down to-day. You are looking—ah—better already," said the kind young man. As for Harry Frankland, he came forward and offered his hand, putting down at the same time on the table a pile of books with which he was loaded.

"My cousin told me you wanted to learn Italian," said Harry; "so I brought you the books. It's a very easy language, though people talk great nonsense about its being musical. It is not a bit sweeter than English. If you only go to Nice, French will answer quite well." He sat down suddenly and uncomfortably as he delivered himself of this utterance: and Colin, for his part, took up the grammar, and looked at it as if he had no other interest under the sun.

"I don't agree with Frankland there," said the curate; "everything is melodious in Italy except the churches. I know you are a keen observer, and I am sure you will be struck with the fine spirit of devotion in the people; but the churches are the most impious edifices in existence," said the Anglian, with warmth,—which was said, not because the curate was thinking of ecclesiastical art at the moment, but by way of making conversation, and conducting the interview between the saved man and his deliverer comfortably to an end.

"I think you said you had never been in Scotland?" said Lauderdale. "But we'll no enter into that question, though I would not say myself but there is a certain influence in the form of a building independent of what you may hear there,—which is one advantage you have over us in this half of the kingdom," said the critic, with an emphasis which was lost up on the company. "I'm curious to see the workings of an irrational system where it has no limit. It's an awfu' interesting subject of inquiry, and there is little doubt in my mind that a real popular system must aye be more or less irrational."

"I beg your pardon," said the curate. "Of course, there are many errors in the Church of Rome; but I don't see that such a word as irrational"—

"It's a very good word," said Lauderdale;

"I'm not using it in a contemptuous sense. Man's an irrational being, take him at his best. I'm not saying if it's above reason or below reason, but out of reason; which makes it none the worse to me. All religion's out of reason for that matter,—which is a thing we never can be got to allow in Scotland. You understand it better in your church," said the philosopher, with a keen glance—half sarcastic, half amused—at the astonished curate, who was taken by surprise, and did not know what to say.

During this time, however, Colin and Harry were eying each other over the Italian books. "You wont find it at all difficult," said young Frankland; "if you had been staying longer, we might have helped you. I say—look here—I am much obliged to you," Harry added, suddenly: "a fellow does not know what to say in such circumstances. I am horribly vexed to think of your being ill. I'd be very glad to do as much for you as you have done for me."

"Which is simply nothing at all," said Colin, hastily; and then he became conscious of the effort the other had made. "Thank you for saying as much. I wish you could, and then nobody would think any more about it," he said, laughing; and then they regarded each other for another half-minute across the table, while Lauderdale and the curate kept on talking heresy. Then Colin suddenly held out his hand.

"It seems my fate to go away without a grudge against anybody," said the young man, "which is hard enough when one has a certain right to a grievance. Good-by. I dare say after this your path and mine will scarcely cross again."

"Good-by," said Harry Frankland, rising up—and he made a step or two to the door, but came back again, swallowing a lump in his throat. "Good-by," he repeated, holding out his hand another time.

"I hope you'll soon get well! God bless you, old fellow! I never knew you till now," —and so disappeared very suddenly, closing the door after him with a little unconscious violence. Colin lay back in his chair with a smile on his face. The two who were talking beside him had their ears intently open to this little by-play; but they went on with their talk, and left the principal actors in this little drama alone.

"I wonder if I am going to die?" said Colin softly to himself; and then he caught the glance of terror, almost of anger, with which his mother stopped short and looked at him, with her lips apart, as if her breathing had stopped for the moment. "Mother, dear, I have no such intention," said the young man; "only that I am leaving Wodensbourne with feelings so amicable and amiable to everybody that it looks alarming. Even Harry Frankland, you see—and this morning his cousin"—

"What about his cousin, Colin?" said the mistress, with bated breath.

Upon which Colin laughed—not harshly, or in mockery—softly, with a sound of tenderness, as if somewhere, not far off, there lay a certain fountain of tears.

"She is very pretty, mother," he said, "very sweet and kind and charming. I dare say she will be a leader of fashion, a few years hence, when she is married; and I shall have great pleasure in paying my respects to her when I go up from the Assembly in black silk stockings, with a deputation to present an address to the queen."

Mrs. Campbell never heard any more of what had been or had not been between her son and the little siren whom she herself, in the bitterness of her heart, had taken upon herself to reprove; and this was how Colin, without, as he said, a grudge against anybody, concluded the episode of Wodensbourne.

Some time, however, elapsed before it was possible for Colin and his companion to leave England. Colin of Ramore was, as his wife had imagined, slow to perceive the necessity for so expensive a proceeding. The father's alarm by this time had come to a conclusion. The favorable bulletins which the mistress had sent from time to time by way of calming the anxiety of the family, had appeared to the farmer the natural indications of a complete recovery; and so thought Archie, who was his father's chief adviser, in the absence of the mistress of the house. "The wife's gone crazy," said big Colin. "She thinks this laddie of hers should be humored and made of as if he was Sir Thomas Frankland's son." And the farmer treated with a little carelessness his wife's assurances that a warmer climate was necessary for Colin.

"Naebody would ever have thought of such a thing, had he been at hame when the accident happened," said Archie, which was,

indeed, very true: and the father and son, who were the money-makers of the family, thought the idea altogether fantastical. The matter came to be mentioned to the minister, who was, like everybody else on the Holy Loch, interested about Colin, and, as it happened, finally reached the ears of the same professor who had urged him to compete for the Baliol scholarship. Now, it would be hard, in this age of competitive examinations, to say anything in praise of a university prize awarded by favor,—not to say that the prizes in Scotch universities are so few as to make such patronage specially invidious. Matters are differently managed nowadays, and it is to be hoped that pure merit always wins the tiny rewards which Scotch learning has at its disposal; but in Colin's day, the interest of a popular professor was worth something. The little conclave was again gathered round the fire in Colin's room at Wodensbourne, reading, with mingled feelings, a letter from Ramore, when another communication from Glasgow was put into Colin's hand. The farmer's letter had been a little impatient, and showed a household disarranged and out of temper. One of the cows was ill, and the maid-servant of the period had not proved herself equal to the emergency. "I don't want to hurry you, or to make Colin move before he is able," wrote the head of the house; "but it appears to me that he would be far more likely to recover his health and strength at home." The mistress had turned aside, apparently to look out at the window, from which was visible a white blast of rain sweeping over the dreary plain which surrounded Wodensbourne, though in reality it was to hide the gush of tears that had come to her eyes. Big Colin and his wife were what people call "a very united couple," and had kept the love of their youth wonderfully fresh in their hearts; but still there were times when the man was impatient and dull of understanding, and could not comprehend the woman, just as, perhaps, though Mrs. Campbell was not so clearly aware of that side of the question, there might be times when, on her side, the woman was equally a hinderance to the man. She looked out upon the sweeping rain, and thought of the "soft weather" on the Holy Loch, which had so depressing an effect upon herself, notwithstanding her sound health and many duties, and of the winds of March which were approaching, and of Colin's life,—the most precious thing on earth, because the most in peril. What was she to do,—a poor woman who had nothing, who could earn nothing, who had only useless yearnings and cares of love to give her son?

While Mrs. Campbell was thus contemplating her impotence, and wringing her hands in secret over the adverse decision from home, Lauderdale was walking about the room in a state of high good-humor and content, radiant with the consciousness of that hundred pounds, "or maybe mair," with which it was to be his unshared, exclusive privilege to succor Colin. "I see no reason why we should wait longer. The mistress is wanted at home, and the east winds are coming on; and, when our siller is spent, we'll make more," said the exultant philosopher. And it was at this moment of all others that the professor's letter was put into the invalid's hands. He read it in silence, while the mistress remained at the window, concocting in her mind another appeal to her husband, and wondering in her tender heart how it was that men were so dull of comprehension and so hard to manage. "If Colin should turn ill again,"—for she dared not even think the word she meant,—"his father would never forgive himsel'," said the mistress to herself; and, as for Lauderdale, he had returned to the contemplation of a Continental Bradshaw, which was all the literature of which, at this crisis, Colin's friend was capable. They were both surprised when Colin rose up, flushed and excited, with this letter, which nobody had attached any importance to, in his hands. "They have given me one of the Snell scholarships," said Colin without any preface, "to travel and complete my studies. It is a hundred pounds a year; and I think, as Lauderdale says, we can start to-morrow," said the young man, who in his weakness and excitement was moved almost to tears.

"Eh, Colin, the Lord bless them!" said the mistress, sitting down suddenly in the nearest chair. She did not know who it was upon whom she was bestowing that benediction, which came from the depths of her heart; but she had to sit still after she had uttered it, blinded by two great tears that made even her son's face invisible, and with a trembling in her frame which rendered her incapable of any movement. She was incon-

sistent, like other human creatures. When she had attained to this sudden deliverance, and had thanked God for it, it instantly darted through her mind that her boy was going to leave her on a solemn and doubtful journey, now to be delayed no longer; and it was some time before she was able to get up and arrange for the last time the carefully-mended linen, which was all ready for him now. She packed it, shedding a few tears over it, and saying prayers in her tender heart for her first-born; and God only knows the difficulty with which she preserved her smile and cheerful looks, and the sinking of her heart when all her arrangements were completed. Would he ever come back again to make her glad? "You'll take awfu' care of my laddie?" she said to Lauderdale, who, for his part, was not delighted with the Snell scholarship; and that misanthrope answered, "Ay, I'll take care of him." That was all that passed between the two guardians, who knew, in their inmost hearts, that the object of their care might never come back again.

All the household of Wodensbourne turned out to wish Colin a good journey next morning when he went away; and the mistress put down the old-fashioned veil when the express was gone which carried him to London, and went home again humbly by the night-train. Fortunately there was in the same carriage with her a harassed young mother with little children, whose necessities speedily demanded the lifting-up of Mrs. Campbell's veil. And the day was clear on the Holy Loch, and all her native hills held out their arms to her, when the good woman reached her home. She was able to see the sick cows that afternoon, and her experience suggested a means of relieving the speechless creatures, which filled the house with admiration. "She may be a foolish woman about her bairns," said big Colin, who was half pleased and half angry to hear her story; but it's a different-looking house when the wife comes hame." And thus the natural sunshine came back again to the mistress's eyes.

PART IX.—CHAPTER XXVI.

Colin and his guardian went on their way in a direction opposite to that in which the mistress travelled sadly alone. They made all the haste possible out of the cold and boisterous weather, to get to sea; which was at once, according to all their hopes, to bring health to the invalid. Lauderdale, who carried his little fortune about him, had been at great pains in dispersing it over his person; so that, in case of falling among thieves,—which, to a man venturing into foreign parts, seemed but too probable,—he might, at least, have a chance of saving some portion of his store. But he was not prepared for the dire and dreadful malady which seized him unawares, and made him equally incapable of taking care of his money and of taking care of Colin. He could not even make out how many days he had lain helpless and useless in what was called the second cabin of the steamer,—where the arrangements and the provisions were less luxurious than in the more expensive quarters. But Lauderdale was unconscious altogether of any possibility of comfort. He gave it up as a thing impossible. He fell into a state of utter scepticism as he lay in agonies of sea-sickness on the shelf which represented a bed. "Say nothing to me about getting there," he said, with as much indignation as he was capable of. "What do you mean by *there*, callant. As for land, I am far from sure that there's such a thing existing. If there is, we'll never get to it. It's an awful thing for a man in his senses to deliver himself up to this idiot of a sea, to be played with like a bairn's ball. It's very easy to laugh,—if you had been standing on your head, like me for twenty days in succession"—

"Only four days," said Colin, laughing, "and the gale is over. You'll be better to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" said Lauderdale, with a contemptuous groan; "I've no faith in to-morrow. I'm no equal to reckoning time according to ordinary methods, and I'm no conscious of ever having existed in a more agreeable position. As for the chances of ever coming head uppermost again, I would not give sixpence for them. It's all very well for the like of you. Let me alone, callant; if this infernal machine of a ship would but go down without more ado, and leave a man in peace,—that's the pleasantest thing I can think of. Don't speak to me about Italy. It's all a snare and delusion to get honest folk off firm ground. Let me get to the bottom in peace and quiet. Life's no worth having at such a price," sighed the sufferer; to whom his undutiful charge answered only by laughter and jibes, which, under the circumstances, were hard to bear.

"You are better now," said the heartless youth, "or you could not go into the philosophy of the subject. To-morrow morning you'll eat a good breakfast, and"—

"Dinna insult my understanding," said Colin's victim. "Go away, and look out for your Italy or whatever you call it. A callant like you believes in everything. Go away and enjoy yourself. If you don't go peaceably, I'll put you out," cried the miserable man, lifting himself up from his pillow, and seizing a book which Colin had laid there, to throw at his tormentor. A sudden lurch, however, made an end of the discomfited philosopher. He fell back, groaning, as Colin escaped out of the little cabin. "It's quite intolerable, and I'll no put up with it any longer," said Lauderdale, to himself. And he recalled, with a sense of injury, Colin's freedom from the overpowering malady under which he was himself suffering. "It's me that's ill, and no him," he thought, with surprise, and the thought prevailed even over sea-sickness. By and by it warmed with a delicious glow of hope and consolation the heart of the sufferer. "If it sets the callant right, I'm no heeding for myself," he said in his own mind, with renewed heroism. Perhaps it was because, as Colin said, Lauderdale was already beginning to be better that he was capable of such generosity. Certainly the ship lurched less and less as the evening went on, and the moonlight stole in at the port-hole and caressed the sufferer, widening his horizon a little before he was aware. He had begun to wonder whether Colin had his great-coat on, before long, and fell asleep in that thought, and worked out his remaining spell of misery in gigantic efforts—continued all through the night—to get into Colin's coat, or to get Colin into his coat, he was not quite sure which. Meanwhile, the object of Lauderdale's cares was on deck, enjoying the moonlight, and the sense of improving health, and all the excitement and novelty of his new life.

They had been four days at sea, and Colin,

who had not been ill, had become acquainted with the aspect of all his fellow-passengers, who were as good sailors as himself. They were going to Leghorn, as the easiest way of reaching Italy; and there were several invalids on board, though none whose means made necessary a passage in the second cabin, of which Colin himself and Lauderdale were the sole occupants. Of the few groups on the quarter-deck who were able to face the gale, Colin had already distinguished one, a young man, a little older than himself, exceedingly pale and worn with illness, accompanied by a girl a year or two younger. The two were so like each other as to leave no doubt that they must be brother and sister, and so unlike as to call forth the compassionate observation of everybody who looked at them. The young lady's blooming face, delicately round and full, with the perfect outline of health and youth, had been paled at first by the struggle between incipient seasickness and the determination not to leave her brother; but by this time—at the cost of whatever private agonies—she had apparently surmounted the common weakness, and was throwing into fuller and fuller certainty, without knowing it, by the contrast of her own bloom, the sentence of death written on his face. When they were on deck, which was the only time that they were visible to Colin, she never left him,—holding fast by his arm with an anxious tenacity; not receiving, but giving support, and watching him with incessant, breathless anxiety, as if afraid that he might suddenly drop away from her side. The brother, on his side, had those hollow eyes, set in wide, pathetic niches, which are never to be mistaken by those who have once watched beloved eyes widening out into that terrible breadth and calm. He was as pale as if the warm blood of life had already been wrung out of him drop by drop; but, notwithstanding this aspect of death, he was still possessed by a kind of feverish activity, the remains of strength, and seemed less disturbed by the gale than any other passenger. He was on deck at all hours, holding conversations with such of the sailors as he could get at,—talking to the captain, who seemed to eschew his society, and to such of his fellow-travellers as were visible. What the subject of his talk might be, Colin from his point of observation could not tell; but there was no mistaking the evidences of natural eloquence and the eagerness of the speaker. "He ought to be a preacher, by his looks," Colin said to himself, as he stood within the limits to which, as a second-class traveller, he was confined, and saw, at a little distance from him, the worn figure of the sick man, upon whose face the moonlight was shining. As usual, the sister was clinging to his arm, and listening to him with a rapt countenance; not so much concerned about what he said as absorbed in anxious investigation of his looks. It was one of the sailors this time who formed the audience to whom the invalid was addressing himself,—a man whom he had stopped in the midst of something he was doing, and who was listening with great evident embarrassment, anxious to escape, but more anxious still, like a good-hearted fellow as he was, not to disturb or irritate the suffering man. Colin drew a step nearer, feeling that the matter under discussion could be no private one, and the sound of the little advance he made caught the invalid's nervous ear. He turned round upon Colin before he could go back, and suddenly fixed him with those wonderful dying eyes. "I will see you again another time, my friend," he said to the released seaman, who hastened off with an evident sense of having escaped. When the stranger turned round, he had to move back his companion, so that in the change of position she came to be exactly in front of Colin, so near that the two could not help seeing, could not help observing each other. The girl withdrew her eyes a minute from her brother to look at the new form thus presented to her. She did not look at Colin as a young woman usually looks at a young man. She was neither indifferent, nor did she attempt to seem so. She looked at him eagerly, with a question in her eyes. The question was a strange one to be addressed, even from the eyes, by one stranger to another. It said as plain as words, "Are you a man to whom I can appeal—are you a man who will understand *him*? Shall I be able to trust you, and ask your help?" That and nothing else was in the wistful, anxious look. If Colin's face had not been one which said "Yes" to all such questions, she would have turned away, and thought of him no more; as it was, she looked a second time with a touch of interest, a gleam of hope. The brother took no more apparent notice of her than if she had been a cloak on his arm, except that from time to time he put out his thin, white hand to make

sure that her hand was still there. He fixed his eyes on Colin with a kind of solemn steadfastness, which had a wonderful effect upon the young man, and said something hasty and brief, a most summary preface, about the beautiful night. "Are you ill?" he added, in the same hasty, breathless way, as if impatient of wasting time on such preliminaries. "Are you going abroad for your health?"

Colin, who was surprised by the question, felt nearly disinclined to answer it; for in spite of himself it vexed him to think that anybody could read that necessity in his face. He said, "I think so," with a smile which was not quite spontaneous; "my friends at least have that meaning," he added more naturally a moment afterward, with the intention of returning the question; but that possibility was taken rapidly out of his hands.

"Have you ever thought of death?" said the stranger. "Don't start; I am dying, or I would not ask you. When a man is dying, he has privileges. Do you know that you are standing on the brink of a precipice! Have you ever thought of death?"

"Yes, a great deal," said Colin. It would be wrong to say that the question did not startle him; but, after the first strange shock of such an address, an impulse of response and sympathy filled his mind. It might have been difficult to get into acquaintance by means of the chit-chat of society, which requires a certain initiation; but such a grand subject was common ground. He answered as very few of the people interrogated by the sick man did answer. He did not show either alarm or horror; he started slightly, it is true, but he answered without much hesitation,—

"Yes, I have thought often of death," said Colin. Though he was only a second-class passenger, this was a question which put all on an equality; and now it was not difficult to understand why the captain eschewed his troublesome question, and how the people looked embarrassed to whom he spoke.

"Ah, I am glad to hear such an answer," said the stranger; "so few people can say so. You have found out, then, the true aim of life. Let us walk about, for it is cold, and I must not shorten my working-days by any devices of my own. My friend, you give me a little hope that, at last, I have found a brother in Christ."

"I hope so," said Colin, gravely. He was still more startled by the strain in which his new companion proceeded than by his first address; but a dying man *had* privileges. "I hope so," Colin repeated; "one of many here."

"Ah, no, not of many," said the invalid; "if you can feel certain of being a child of God, it is what but few are permitted to do. My dear friend, it is not a subject to deceive ourselves upon. It is terribly important for you and me. Are you sure that you are fleeing from the wrath to come? Are you sure that you are prepared to meet your God?"

They had turned into the full moonlight, which streamed upon their faces. The ship was rushing along through a sea still agitated by the heavings of the past storm, and there was nothing moving on deck except some scattered seamen busy in their mysterious occupations. Colin was slow to answer the new question thus addressed to him. He was still very young; delicate, and reticent about all the secrets of his soul; not wearing his heart upon his sleeve even in particulars less intimate and momentous than this. "I am not afraid of my God," he said, after a minute's pause; "pardon me, I am not used to speak much on such subjects. I cannot imagine that to meet God will be less than the greatest joy of which the soul is capable. He is the great Father. I am not afraid."

"Oh, my friend!" said the eager stranger, —his voice sounded in Colin's ear like the voice of a desperate man in a life-boat, calling to somebody who was drowning in a storm,—"don't deceive yourself; don't take up a sentimental view of such an important matter. There is no escape except through one way. The great object of our lives is to know how to die,—and to die is despair, without Christ."

"What is it to live without him?" said Colin. "I think the great object of our lives is to live. Sometimes it is very hard work. And, when one sees what is going on in the world, one does not know how it is possible to keep living without him," said the young man, whose mind had taken a profound impression from the events of the last three months. "I don't see any meaning in the world otherwise. So far we are agreed. Death, which interests you so much, will clear up all the rest."

"Which interests me?" said his new friend; "if we were indeed rational crea-

tures, would it not interest every one? Beyond every other subject, beyond every kind of ambition and occupation. Think what it is to go out of this life, with which we are familiar, to stand alone before God, to answer for the deeds done in the body."

"Then, if you are so afraid of God," said Colin, "what account do you make of Christ?"

A gleam of strange light went over the gaunt eager face. He put out his hand with his habitual movement, and put it upon his sister's hand, which was clinging to his arm. "Alice, hush!" said the sick man! don't interrupt me. He speaks as if he knew what I mean; he speaks as if he, too, had something to do with it. I may be able to do him good, or he me. I have not the pleasure of knowing your name," he said, suddenly turning again to Colin with the strangest difference of manner. "Mine is Meredith. My sister and I will be glad if you will come to our cabin. I should like to have a little conversation with you. Will you come?"

Colin would have said no; but the word was stayed on his lips by a sudden look from the girl who had been drawn on along with with them, without any apparent will of her own. It was only in her eyes that any indication of individual exertion on her part was visible. She did not speak, nor appear to think it necessary that she should second her brother's invitation; but she gave Colin a hasty look, conveying such an appeal as went to his heart. He did not understand it; if he had been asked to save a man's life, the petition could not have been addressed to him more imploringly. His own inclination gave way instantly before the eager supplication of those eyes; not that he was charmed or attracted by her, for she was too much absorbed, and her existence too much wrapt up in that of her brother, to exercise any personal influence. A woman so pre-occupied had given up her privileges of woman. Accordingly there was no embarrassment in the direct appeal she made. The vainest man in existence would not have imagined that she cared for his visit on her own account. Yet it was at her instance that Colin changed his original intention, and followed them down below to the cabin. His mind was sufficiently free to leave him at liberty to be interested in others, and his curiosity was already roused.

The pair did not look less interesting when Colin sat with them at the table below, in the little cabin, which did not seem big enough to hold anything else except the lamp. There, however, the sister exerted herself to make tea, for which she had all the materials. She boiled her little kettle over a spirit-lamp in a corner apart, and set everything before them with a silent rapidity very wonderful to Colin, who perceived at the same time that the sick man was impatient even of those soft and noiseless movements. He called to her to sit down two or three times before she was ready, and visibly fumed over the slight commotion, gentle as it was. He had seated himself in a corner of the hard little sofa which occupied one side of the cabin, and where there already lay a pile of cushions for his comfort. His thoughts were fixed on eternity, as he said and believed; but his body was profoundly sensitive to all the little annoyances of time. The light tread of his sister's foot on the floor seemed to send a cruel vibration through him, and he glanced round at her with a momentary glance of anger, which called forth an answering sentiment in the mind of Colin, who was looking on.

"Forgive me, Arthur," said the girl, "I am so clumsy; I can't help it,"—an apology which Arthur answered with a melancholy frown.

"It is not you who are clumsy; it is the Evil One who tempts me perpetually, even by your means," he said. "Tell me what your experience is," he continued, turning to Colin with more eagerness than ever; "I find some people who are embarrassed when I speak to them about the state of their souls; some who assent to everything I say, by way of getting done with it; some who are shocked and frightened, as if speaking of death would make them die the sooner. You alone have spoken to me like a man who knows something about the matter. Tell me how you have grown familiar with the subject; tell me what your experiences are.

Perhaps no request that could possibly have been made to him would have embarrassed him so much. He was interested and touched by the strange pair in whose company he found himself, and could not but regard with a pity, which had some fellow-feeling in it, the conscious state of life-in-death in which his questioner stood, who was not, at the

same time, much older than himself, and still in what ought to be the flower of his youth. Though his own thoughts were of a very different completion, Colin could not but be impressed by the aspect of the other youth, who was occupying the solemn position from which he himself seemed to have escaped.

"Neither of us can have much experience one way or another," he said, feeling somehow his own limitations in the person of his new companion; "I have been near dying; that is all."

"Have been?" said Meredith. "Are you not—are not we all—near dying now? A gale more or less, a spark of fire, a wrong turn of the helm, and we are all in eternity! How can any reasonable creature be indifferent for a moment to such a terrible thought."

"It would be terrible, indeed, if God had nothing to do with it," said Colin; and, no doubt, death overcomes one when one looks at it far off. I don't think, however, that his face carries much terror when he is near. The only thing is the entire ignorance we are in. What it is; where it carries us; what is the extent of the separation it makes,—all these questions are so hard to answer." Colin's eyes went away as he spoke; and his new friend, like Matty Frankland, was puzzled and irritated by the look which he could not follow. He broke in hastily, with a degree of passion totally unlike Colin's calm.

"You think of it as a speculative question," he said; "I think of it as a dreadful reality. You seem at leisure to consider when and how; but have you ever considered the dreadful alternative? Have you never imagined yourself one of the lost,—in outer darkness,—shut out,—separated from all good,—condemned to sink lower and lower? Have you ever contemplated the possibility?"—

"No," said Colin, rising; "I have never contemplated that possibility, and I have no wish to do so now. Let us postpone the discussion. Nothing anybody can say," the young man continued, holding out his hand to meet the feverish thin fingers which were stretched toward him, "can make me afraid of God."

"Not if you had to meet him this night in judgment?" said the solemn voice of the young prophet, who would not lose a last opportunity. The words and the look sent a strange chill through Colin's veins. His hand was held tight in the feverish hand of the sick man; the dark hollowed eyes were looking him through and through. Death himself, could he have taken shape and form, could scarcely have confronted life in a more solemn guise. "Not if you had to meet him in judgment this night?"

"You put the case very strongly," said Colin, who grew a little pale in spite of himself. "But I answer, No—no. The gospel has come for very little purpose if it leaves any of his children in fear of the Heavenly Father. No more to-night. You look tired, as you may well be, with all your exertions, and after this rough weather."

"The rough weather is nothing to me," said Meredith; "I must work while it is day—the night cometh in which no man can work."

"The night has come," said Colin, doing the best he could to smile,—"the quiet human night, in which men do not attempt to work. Don't you think you should obey the natural ordinances as well as the spiritual? To-morrow we will meet, better qualified to discuss the question."

"To-morrow we may meet in eternity," said the dying man.

"Amen. The question will be clear then, and we shall have no need to discuss it," said Colin. This time he managed better to smile. "But, wherever we meet to-morrow, good-by for to-night,—good-by. You know what the word means," said the young man. He smiled to himself now at the thoughts suggested to him by his own words. He too was pale, and had no great appearance of strength. If he himself felt the current of life flowing back into his veins, the world, and even his friends, were scarcely of his opinion. He looked but a little way farther off the solemn verge than his new acquaintance did, as he stood at the door of the little cabin, his face lit up with the vague, sweet, brightening of a smile, which was not called forth by anything external, but come out of the musings and memories of his own heart. Such a smile could not be counterfeit. When he had turned toward the narrow stair which led to the deck, he felt a touch upon his arm, like the touch of a bird, it was so light and momentary. "Come again," said a voice in his ears, "come again." He knew it was the sister who spoke; but the voice did not sound in Colin's ears as the voice of a woman to a man. It was impersonal, disembodied, inde-

pendent of all common restrictions. She had merged her identity altogether in that of her brother. All the light, all the warmth, all the human influence she had, she was pouring into him, like a lantern, bright only for the bearer, turning a dark side to the world. Colin's head throbbed and felt giddy when he emerged into the open air above, into the cold moonlight, to which the heaving of the sea gave a look of disturbance and agitation which almost reached the length of pain. There was nothing akin, in that passionless light, to the tumult of the great chafing ocean, the element most like humanity. True, it was not real storm, but only the long pantings of the vast bosom, after one of those anger-fits to which the giant is prone; but a fanciful spectator could not but link all kinds of imaginations to the night, and Colin was preëminently a fanciful spectator. It looked like the man storming, the woman watching with looks of powerless anguish; or like the world heaving and struggling, and some angel of heaven grieving and looking on. Colin lingered on the deck, though it was cold, and rest was needful.

What could there be in the future existence more dark, more hopeless than the terrible enigmas which built up their dead walls around a man in this world, and passed interpretation. Even the darkest hell of poetic invention comprehended itself and knew why it was; but this life who comprehended, who could explain? The thought was very different from those with which Arthur Meredith resigned himself reluctantly to rest. He could not consent to sleep till he had written a page or two of the book which he meant to leave as a legacy to the world, and which was to be called "A Voice from the Grave;" the poor young fellow had forgotten that God himself was likely to take some pains about the world which had cost so much. After the "unspeakable gift" once for all, it appeared to young Meredith that the rest of the work was left on his shoulders, and on the shoulders of such as he; and, accordingly, he wore his dying strength out, addressing everybody in season and out of season, and working at "A Voice from the Grave." A strange voice it was,—saying little that was consolatory; yet, in its way, true as everything is true, in a certain limited sense, which comes from the heart. The name of the Redeemer was named a great many times; but the spirit of it was as if no Redeemer had ever come. A world dark, confused, and full of judgments and punishments,—a world in which men would not believe though one rose from the grave,—was the world into which he looked, and for which he was working. His sister Alice, watching by his side, noting with keen anxiety every time the pen slipped from his fingers, every time it went vaguely over the paper in starts which told he had gone half to sleep over his work, sat with her intelligence unawakened, and her whole being slumbering, thinking of nothing but him. After all, Colin was not so fanciful when in his heart it occurred to him to connect these two with the appearance of the moon and the sea. They had opened the book of their life to him fortuitously, without any explanations, and he did not know what to make of it. When he descended to his own cabin and found Lauderdale fast asleep, the young man could not but give a little time to the consideration of this new scene which had opened in his life. It was natural to Colin's age and temperament to expect that something would come of such a strange accidental meeting; and so he lay and pondered it, looking out at the troubled moonlight on the water, till that disturbed guardian of the night had left her big troublesome charge to himself. The ship ploughed along its lonely road with tolerable composure and quietness, for the first time since it set out, and permitted to some of its weary passengers unwonted comfort and sleep; but, as for Colin, a sense of having set out upon a new voyage came into his mind, he could not tell why.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"I'M no saying if I'm well or ill," said Lauderdale; "I'm saying it's grand for you to leave your friends in a suffering condition, and go off and make up to other folks. It's well to be off with the old love. For my own part, however," said Colin's Mentor, "I'm no for having a great deal to do with women. They're awfu' doubtful creatures, you may take my word for it: some seem about as good as the angels,—no that I have any personal acquaintance with the angels, but it's aye an intelligible metaphor; some just as far on the other side. Besides, it's a poor thing for a man to fritter away what little capability of a true feeling there may be in him. I've no fancy

for the kind of friendships that are carried on after the manner of flirtations. For my part, I'm a believer in *love*," said the philosopher, with a sudden fervor of reproof which brought an unusual amount of color to his face.

"You are absurd all the same," said Colin, laughing; "here is no question either of love, or flirtation, or even friendship. I know what you mean," he added with a slightly heightened color; "you think that, having once imagined I admired Miss Frankland, I ought to have continued in the same mind all my life. You don't appreciate my good sense, Lauderdale; but, at all events, the young lady has nothing to do with my interest here."

"I was saying nothing about Miss Frankland," said Lauderdale; "I was making a confession of faith on my own part, which has naething to do with you that I can see. As for the young leddy, as you say, if it doesna begin with her, it's a' the more likely to end with her, according to my experience. To be sure, there's no great amount of time; but a boat like this is provocative of intimacy. You're aye in the second cabin, which is a kind of safeguard; but, as for your good sense"—

"Don't associate that poor fellow's name with anything ridiculous," said Colin; "but come up on deck, like a reasonable man, and judge for yourself."

"Ay, ay," said Lauderdale, slowly; "I understand the kind of thing. I've seen it many a day myself. Partly youthfulness, that thinks the thing that is happening to itself more important than anything else in the world; partly a kind of self-regard; partly a wish to take compensation out of the world for what it is giving up. I'm no saying but there's something better at the bottom; but it's awfu' hard to separate the physical and the spiritual. I wouldna say but even you, your own self—but it took a different form with you," said Lauderdale, stopping short abruptly. Looking at Colin, and seeing that still there was not much bloom on his worn cheeks, it occurred to his careful guardian that it might be as well not to recall the distempered thoughts of the sick-room at Wodensbourne to the mind of his patient. "This is a different kind of constitution, I'm thinking," he went on, in some haste.

"I suppose you are right," said Colin; "it took a different form with me,—a more undutiful, unbelieving form; for Meredith makes no question what it means, as I used to do."

"I'm no so clear of that," said Lauderdale. "It's seldom unbelief that asks a reason. I would not say, now I'm on my feet, but what there may be a place known among men by the name of Italy. Come, callant, and let me see if the skies are aught like what they are at hame."

Everything was changed when Colin and his friend stood again on deck. The calm weather had restored to life the crowd of sea-sick passengers who, like Lauderdale, had, up to this moment, kept themselves and their miseries under cover below. The universal scepticism and doubt of ever being better had given way to a cheerful confidence. Everybody believed—happy in his delusion—that for himself he had mastered the demon, and would be sea-sick no more. Among so many, it was not so easy to distinguish Meredith as Colin had expected; and he had time to discuss several matters with Lauderdale, showing a certain acrid feeling on his side of the question which surprised his interlocutor, before his new friends appeared. Colin had taken his second-class berth gladly enough, without thinking of any drawback; but, when he saw the limit clearly before his eyes, and perceived within reach, and indeed within hearing, the little "society" which he was not able to join, the fact of this momentary inferiority chafed him a little. Like most other people, he had a dislike to the second place,—not that he cared about society, as he took pains to convince himself. But the truth was, that Colin did care for society, and, though too proud to confess such a thought, even to himself, secretly longed to join those new groups which were gradually growing into acquaintance before his eyes. When he saw the two figures approaching which had attracted him so strongly on the previous night, his heart gave a little jump, though his eyes were fixed in another direction. They were not only two curious human creatures whom it was hard to comprehend, but, at the same time, they represented the world to Colin, who was at this present moment shut out from intercourse with anybody but Lauderdale, whose manner of musing he knew by heart. He did not look round, but he heard the footsteps approaching, and would

have been equally disappointed and irritated had they turned back. This danger, however, speedily terminated. Meredith came up hastily, drawing along with him, as usual, the sister who had not any being except in him, and laid his thin hand on Colin's shoulder. The sunshine and the brightened skies did not change the strain of the young preacher's thoughts. He laid his hand on Colin, pressing the young man's shoulder with an emphatic touch. "We meet again in the land of living men, in the place of hope," he said, leading his sister with him as he turned. She clung to him so closely that they moved like one, without any apparent volition on her part; and even Colin's salutation seemed to disturb her, as if it had been something unnecessary and unexpected. Her little hurried bow, her lips that just parted, in an anxious momentary smile, had a certain surprise in them; and there was even a little impatience, as if she had said, "Answer *him;* why should you mind me?" in the turn of her head.

"Yes, we meet on a bright morning, which looks like life and hope," said Colin, "and everybody seems disposed to enjoy it; even my friend here, who has been helpless since we started, has come to life at last."

Thus directed, Meredith's eager eyes turned to Lauderdale, upon whom they paused with their usual solemn inquiring look. "I hope he has come to life in a higher sense," said the sick man, who thought it his duty to speak in season and out of season; but for that true life, existence is only the payment of a terrible penalty. I hope, like you, he has thought on the great subject."

When he stopped short, and looked straight in Lauderdale's face, there was a wonderful silence over the little group. The dying prophet said nothing, but looked down, awful and abstracted, from the heights of death on which he was standing, to receive an answer, which Lauderdale was too much taken by surprise, and Colin too much alarmed for the result of the inquiry, to give.

"I've thought on an awfu' quantity of subjects," said Lauderdale, after a moment,— "a hundred or two more than ever have gone through your mind at your age; and I'm no averse to unfolding my experiences, as this callant will tell you," he added, with a smile, which, however, was lost upon his questioner.

"Your experiences!" said Meredith. He put his thin arm eagerly, before any one was aware what he intended to do, through Lauderdale's arm. "I frighten and horrify many," said the invalid, not without a gleam of satisfaction; "but there are so few, so miserably few, with whom it is possible to have true communion. Let me share your experiences; there must be instruction in them."

The philosopher, thus seized, made a comical grimace, unseen by anybody but Colin; but the sick man was far too much in earnest to observe any reluctance on the part of his new acquaintance, and Lauderdale submitted to be swept on in the strange wind of haste and anxiety and eagerness which surrounded the dying youth, to whom a world lying in wickedness, and "I, I alone" left to maintain the knowledge of God among men, was the one great truth. There was not much room to move about upon the deck; and, as Meredith turned and went on, with his arm in Lauderdale's, his sister, who was sharply turned round also by his movement, found it hard enough to maintain her position by his side. Though he was more attached to her than to any other living creature, it was not his habit, as it might have been in happier circumstances, to care for her comfort, or to concern himself about her personal convenience. He swept her along with him on the hampered deck, through passages which were barely wide enough for two, but through which she crushed herself as long as possible, catching her dress on all the corners, and losing her breath in the effort. As for Colin, he found himself left behind with a half-amazed, half-mortified sensation.

> "Not his the form, not his the eye,
> That youthful maidens wont to fly;"

and though he was not truly open to Lauderdale's jibe concerning flirtations, the very name of that agreeable but dangerous amusement had roused him into making the discovery that Meredith's sister was very pretty, and that there was something extremely interesting in the rapt devotion to her brother which at first had prevented him from observing her. It seemed only natural that, when the sick man seized upon Lauderdale, the young lady should have fallen to Colin's share; and he kept standing where they had left him, as has been described, half amused and half mortified, thinking to himself that,

after all, he was not an ogre, nor a person whom ladies in general are apt to avoid. After poor little Alice had hurt herself and torn her dress in two or three rapid turns through the limited space, she gave up her brother's arm with a pained, surprised look, which went to Colin's heart, and withdrew to the nearest bench, gathering up her torn dress in her hand, and still keeping her eyes upon him. What good she thought she could do by her watching it was difficult to tell; but it evidently was the entire occupation and object of her life. She scarcely turned her eyes upon Colin when he approached; and, as the eyes were like a fawn's,—brown, wistful, and appealing (whereas Miss Matty's were blue, and addicted to laughter),—it is not to be wondered at that Colin, in whom his youth was dimly awakening, with all its happier susceptibilities, should feel a little pique at her neglect. The shadow of death had floated away from the young man's horizon. He believed himself, whether truly or not, to have come to a new beginning of life. He had been dead, and was alive again; and the solemn interval of suffering, during which he questioned earth and heaven, had made the rebound all the sweeter, and restored with a freshness almost more delightful than the first, the dews and blossoms to the new world. Thus he approached Alice Meredith, who had no attention to spare to him,—not with any idea that he had fallen in love with her, or that love was likely, but only with that vague sense that Paradise still exists somewhere, not entirely out of reach, and, that the sweet Eve, who alone can reveal it, might meet him unawares at any time of his dreary path, which is one of the sweetest privileges of youth. But he did not know what to say to the other youthful creature, who ought to have been as conscious of such possibilities as he. No thought was in *her* mind that she ever would be the Eve of any paradise; and the world to her was a confused and darkling universe, in which death lay lurking somewhere, she could not tell how close at hand; death, not for herself, which would be sweet, but for one far dearer than herself. The more she felt the nearness of this adversary, the more she contradicted herself and would not believe it; and so darkness spread all round the beginning path of the poor girl, who was not much more than a child. She would not have understood the meaning of any pretty speeches, had Colin been so far left to himself as to think of making them. As it was, she looked up for a moment wistfully as he sat down beside her. She thought in her mind that he would be a good friend for Arthur, and might cheer him; which was the chief thing she cared for in this world.

"Has your brother been long ill?" said Colin. It seemed the only subject on which the two could speak.

"Ill?" said Alice; "he is not very ill; he takes a great deal of exercise. You must have observed that; and his appetite is very good." The question roused her to contradict her own fears, and doing so out loud to another was more effectual somehow than anything she could say to herself. "The storm which made everybody else so ill had no effect upon Arthur," she went on almost with a little irritation. "He is thin, to be sure; but then many people are thin who are quite well; and I am sure you do not look very strong yourself."

"No," said Colin, who possessed the instinct, rare among men, of divining what his companion wished him to say; "my people had given me up a few weeks ago. I gave myself a poke somewhere in the lungs which very nearly made an end of me; but I mean to get better if I can," he said with a smile which for the moment brought a doubtful look upon the girl's face.

"You don't think it wrong to talk like that," she said; "that was what made me wish so much you should come to see Arthur. Perhaps if he were more cheerful, it would do him good. Not that he is very ill, you know, but still—We are going to Italy," she went on with a little abruptness," "to a place near Rome,—not to Rome itself, because I am a little afraid of that; but into the country. Are you going there?"

"I suppose so," said Colin; "it is the place in the world most interesting. Do you not think so? But everything will be new to me."

"If you were to come where we are going," said his companion with a composure which was wonderful to Colin, "you would find it cheaper, and you could see things almost as easily, and it would not be so hot when summer comes. I think it would do Arthur a great deal of good. It is so hard to know what to do with a man," she went on, unconsciously yielding to that inexpressible

influence of a sympathetic listener which few people can resist; "they cannot occupy themselves, you know, as we women can, and they get tired of *our* society. I have so longed to find some man who would understand him, and whom he could talk to," cried the poor girl, with tears in her eyes. She made a pause when she had said so much; not that it occurred to her that any one could misunderstand her, but because the tears were getting into her voice, which was a weakness not to be yielded to. "I don't know why I should cry," she added a minute after, with a faint smile; "it is talking about Italy I suppose; but you will like it when you get there."

"Yet you do not seem to like it," said Colin, with a little curiosity.

This time she made him no direct answer. Her eyes were following her brother and Lauderdale as they walked about the deck. "Is *he* nice?" she asked with a little timidity, pointing at Lauderdale, and giving another hasty, wistful look at Colin's face.

"I don't know if you would think so," said Colin; "he is very Scotch, and a little odd sometimes, but kinder and better, and more truly a friend than words can describe. He is tender and true," said the young man, with a little enthusiasm which woke up the palest ghost of an answering light in his young companion's face.

"Being Scotch is a recommendation to me," she said; "the only person I ever loved, except Arthur, of course,—and those who are gone,—was Scotch." After this quaint intimation, which woke in Colin's mind an incipient spark of the earliest stage of jealousy,—not jealousy proper, but only a lively and contemptuous curiosity to know 'who the fellow was,"—she dropped back again into her habitual silence. When Colin tried to bring her back by ordinary remarks about the voyage and their destination, she answered him simply by "Yes," or "No." She was of one idea, incapable apparently of exerting her mind on any other subject. When they had been thus sitting silent for some time, she began again abruptly at the point where she had left off.

"If you were coming to the same place," she said,—"Arthur can speak Italian very well, and I know it a little,—we might be able to help you, and you would have very good air,—pure air off the sea. If he had society, he would soon be better." This was said softly to herself, and then she went on, drawn farther and farther by the sympathy which she felt in her listener. "There are only us two in the world."

"If I can do anything," said Colin, "as long as we are here at least; but there is no lack of society," he said, pointing to the groups on the quarter-deck, at which Alice Meredith shook her head.

"He frightens them," she said; "they prefer to go out of his way; they don't want to answer his questions. I don't know why he does it. When he was young, he was fond of society, and went out a great deal; but he has changed so much of late," said the anxious sister, with a certain look of doubt and wonder on her face. She was not quite sure whether the change was an improvement. "I don't understand it very well myself," she went on, with a sigh; "perhaps I have not thought enough about it. And then he does not mind what I say to him—men never do; I suppose it is natural. But, if he had society, and you would talk and keep him from writing"—

"Does he write?" said Colin, with new interest. It was a bond of sympathy he had not expected to hear of; and here again the tears, in spite of all her exertions, got into Alice's voice.

"At night, when he ought to be sleeping," said the poor girl. "I don't mean to say he is very ill; but, oh! Mr. Campbell, is it not enough to make any man ill to sit up when he is so tired he cannot keep awake, writing that dreadful book? He is going to call it 'A voice from the Grave.' I sometimes think he wants to break my heart; for what has the grave to do with it? He is rather delicate, but so are you. Most people are delicate," said poor Alice, "when they sit up at night, and don't take care of themselves. If you could only get him to give up that book, I would bless you all my life."

Such an appeal from sweet lips quivering with suppressed anguish, from beautiful eyes full of heavy tears, was not likely to be without effect; and, when Colin went to his own cabin in the evening, hearing but imperfectly the criticisms of Lauderdale on his new friend and his affairs, he was more and more impressed by the conviction that something must come of an encounter so singular and unexpected. The young man immediately set

himself to wind new threads of fate about his feet, and, while he was doing so, thought with a little thrill of the wonderful way in which things came about, and the possible purposes of Providence in this new change. It aroused and excited him to see the new scenery coming into its place, and the ground preparing for another act of his life.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"WHAT for?" said Lauderdale. "I'll no say but what it's an interesting study, if life was long enough to allow such indulgences; but—take you my word for it, callant—it's awfu' hard to see a life wearing out like that, drop by drop. It's not only that you might get to be fond of the poor lad himself, and miss him sae when he was gone," said the philosopher, who had not just then perfect command of himself; but it raises awfu' questions, and you are not one of those that can take things as they come and ask no reason. What should you bind yourself for? I see a' that would happen as clear as day. You would go into a bit country place with him, only to watch him die; and, when he was gone, you would be left with the bit bonnie sister, two bairns together—and then; but you're no destitute of imagination," said Lauderdale, grimly; "and I leave you to figure that part of the business to yoursel'."

"This is foolish talk," said Colin. "The sister, except that I am very sorry for her, has nothing in the world to do with it. If we could manage as well beside them as anywhere else, one should be glad to be of some use to one's fellow-creatures. I am not afraid of anything that might happen," the young man added, with a slight additional color. "As for responsibility, it is strange to hear you warning me against that,—you who were willing to take upon yourself all the responsibility of travelling with me when you thought I was dying"—

"No such thing," said Lauderdale, hotly. "I'm fool enough, no doubt; but no such a fool as that. Callants of your age canna keep a medium. When you have a sore finger, you take thoughts of dying; but I'm a man of some experience in this world. I'm travelling for my own pleasure and no for you, nor no man. As for this lad, I've seen the like before. He's no singular, though I've little doubt he thinks he is. It's awfu' hard work to stop short just when you've come to the brow of the hill, and see a' the fair prospect before you," said Colin's guardian, whose countenance was overcast and cloudy. "When the mind's no very strong, the like of that sets it off its balance. I've seen them that came out of the trial as calm as the angels of God," he went on, after a little pause, with a strain in his voice which showed unusual emotion; "and I have seen them that battled with him that made them, to make him render a reason; and I have seen them that took it with a high hand, and turned into preachers like this one. 'A Voice from the Grave,' did she say? But you're a' babies that ken no better. How are the like of you to know that there's men like me—ay, and women more than men—that would give a' their living, and would not grudge life itself, no for a voice only, but for two or three words—for one word and no more." He put down his face in his hands for a moment as he spoke, though not to conceal tears; for Lauderdale's sorrows, whatever they might have been, were wrapped in the deadly stillness of that past grief with which no stranger intermeddles; and his young companion was watching him sorrowfully, sympathetically, but in ignorance, and with the timidity of youth, not knowing what to say.

"Him, and the like of him," said Lauderdale, going on more softly when he found that Colin made no reply, "their voice from the grave is like a Halloween ghost to frighten the unwary. Whisht, callant; I'm no laughing at the poor dying lad. There's nae laughing in my head one way or another; but it's so little you know. You never think, with your warnings and your terrors, of us that have sat by our graves for years, and been confounded by the awfu' silence. Why can they no speak nor we hear? You'll no tell me that Heaven and the presence of God can take the love out of a living soul. I wish you would not disturb my mind with your vain thoughts," he said, with a momentary fretfulness. "It's no a question I dare go into. If love's no everlasting, I've no desire to be everlasting myself; and, if I'm to be no more to them that belong to me hereafter than to those legions of strange angels, or a haill nation of other folk!— Whisht, callant! you're no to say such things to me."

Colin said nothing at all to interrupt this monologue. He let his friend wear himself

out, pacing up and down the narrow little cabin, which it required but two of Lauderdale's strides to traverse from end to end. He had known a chance word to produce similar results before; but had never been made acquainted with the real history of his friend's life. He waited now till this excitement was over, knowing by experience that it was the best way; and, after a while, Lauderdale calmed down and came back to his seat, and resumed the conversation where he had left it before his heart within him was roused to make brief utterance of its unknown burden.

"The short and the long of it is," said Lauderdale, "that you're making up your mind, by some process of your own—I'm no saying what it is—to give up our own plan and tack yourself on to a poor failing callant that has not above a month or two to live."

"How do you know he has not above a month or two to live?" said Colin. "You thought the same of me a few weeks ago. One hears of the climate working wonders: and, if he had some one by him to amuse and interest him, and keep him off that book, as —as Miss Meredith says"—

"Oh, ay, no doubt, no doubt," said Lauderdale, dryly. "He has one nurse already bound to him body and soul, and, maybe, if he had another to undertake the spiritual department!— But you're no old enough, callant, to take him in hand, and you're no strong enough, and I cannot say, for my own part, that I see any special qualification for such an office in ye," said the merciless critic, looking at Colin in a seriously contemplative way, with his head a little on one side. After he had shown any need emotion, Lauderdale, like a true Britain, despised himself, and made as great a leap as was practicable on the other side.

"No," said Colin, who was a little piqued in spite of himself; "I don't suppose I am good for much; and I never thought of being his nurse. It is out of the question to imagine that I could be for Meredith, or any other man, what you have been for me."

"I've kent ye longer than two days," said Colin's guardian, without showing any signs of propitiation, "which to be sure makes a little difference. Those that are destined to come together need little time to make it up —I've aye been a believer, for my part, not only in love, but in friendship, at first sight."

"There's no question of either love or friendship," said Colin, with prompt irritation. "Surely one may feel pity, sympathy, fellow-feeling, with a man of one's own age without being misunderstood."

"I understand you an awfu' deal better than you understand yourself," said Lauderdale; "and, as I was saying, I am a great believer in first impressions. It's a mercenary kind of thing to be friends with a man for his good qualities,—there's a kind of barter in it that goes against my instincts; but, when you take to a man for nae reason, but out of pure election and choice, that's real friendship—or love, as it might me," he went on, without pity, enjoying the heightened color and air of embarrassment on Colin's face.

"You say all this to make me lose my temper," said Colin. "Don't let us say any more to-night; I will think it all over again, since you oppose it, and to-morrow"—

"Ay, to-morrow," said Lauderdale,—"it's a bonnie rare world, and we'll no interfere with it. Good-night, callant; I'm no a man that can be quarrelled with if you tried ever so hard,—to-morrow you'll take your own way."

Colin did not sleep till the night was far advanced. He lay awake, watching the moonlight, and pondering over this matter, which looked very important as he contemplated it. By thinking was meant, in his mind, as in most minds of his age, not any complicated course of reasoning, but a rapid framing of pictures on one side and the other. On one side he saw Meredith beguiled from his book, persuaded to moderate his words in season and out of season, and induced to take a little interest in ordinary human affairs, gradually recovering his health, and returning to a life which should no longer appear to him a near preparation for dying; and it cannot be denied that there did come into Colin's mind a certain consciousness of grateful looks and sweet-voiced thanks attending this restoration, which made the pictures wonderfully pleasant. Then, on the other side, there was Lauderdale's sketch of the sudden possibilities filled in by Colin's imagination: poor Meredith dying slowly, looking death in the face for long days and lonely nights, sorely wanting all the succor that human compassion could give him; and the forlorn and solitary mourner that would be left, so young and friendless, by the stranger's grave. Perhaps,

on the whole, this suggestion of Lauderdale's decided the matter. The thought was too pitiful, too sad to be borne. She was nothing in the world to him; but she was a woman, and Colin thought indignantly of the unchristian cowardice which, for fear of responsibility, would desert a friendless creature exposed to such dangers. Notwithstanding, he was prudent, very prudent, as was natural. It was not Alice, but Arthur Meredith who was his friend. She had nothing to do with this decision whatever. If such a melancholy necessity should happen, Colin felt it was in him, respectfully, sympathetically, to take the poor girl home; and if, somehow, the word "home" suggested to him his mother, who that knew anything of the mistress could wonder at that thought? Thus he went on drawing the meshes closer about his feet, while the moonlight shone on the sea, and poor Meredith wrote his book, and Lauderdale, as sleepless as his charge, anxiously pondered the new state of affairs. At home that same moon suggested Colin to more minds than one in the peaceful country over which the March winds were blowing. Miss Matty thought of him, looking out over the Wodensbourne avenue, where the great trees stood stately in the moonlight streaming a glory on their heads. She was so late because she had been at a ball, where her Cousin Harry had made himself highly disagreeable, and when, prompted by his sulky looks, she had carried a little flirtation a hair's-breadth too far, which was not a comfortable consciousness. Why she should think of Colin under such circumstances it would be hard to say; but the thoughts of a young woman at two o'clock in the morning are not expected to be logical. She thought of him with a shadow of the same feeling that made the psalmist long for the wings of a dove; though, if Miss Matty had but known it, her reception—could she have made her escape to her former worshipper at that moment—would have been of a disappointing character. And about the same time the mistress woke out of her quiet sleep, and saw the broad white flood of light streaming through the little square window of the room in which Colin was born. Her fancy was busy enough about him night and day; and she fancied she could see, as clear as a picture, the ship speeding on, with perhaps its white wings spread over the glistening sea, and the moon stealing in at the cabin window, and caressing her boy, who was fast asleep, resting and gathering strength with new life breathing in upon him in every breath of favorable wind that crisped the sleeping sea. Such was the vision that came to the mind of the mistress when she awoke in the "dead of night," and saw the moonlight at her window. "God bless my Colin," she said to herself, as she closed her tender eyes; and in the mean time Colin, thinking nothing of his old love, and not very much of his home-life, was busily engaged in weaving for himself another tangle in the varied web of existence, although none of the people most interested in him—except Lauderdale, who saw a faint shadow of the future—had the least idea that this night at sea was of any moment in his life. He did not know it himself, though he was conscious of a certain thrill of pleasant excitement and youthful awe, half voluntary, half real. And so the new scene got arranged for this new act in the wonderful drama; and all the marvellous, delicate influences of Providence and will, poising and balancing each other, began to form and shape the further outlines of Colin's life.

An Ample Apology.—A clergyman at Cambridge preached a sermon which one of his auditors commended. "Yes," said the gentleman to whom it was mentioned, "it was a good sermon, but he stole it." This was repeated to the preacher. He resented it, and called on the gentleman to retract. "I am not," replied the aggressor, "very apt to retract my words; but in this instance I will. I said you had stolen the sermon. I find I was wrong, for on returning home and referring to the book whence I thought it was taken, *I found it there.*"

The *English Woman's Journal* for May has an article commending in warm terms the conduct of the American women during our civil war, both their readiness to meet self-sacrifices and their effective co-operation to supply the needs of the soldiers. The writer predicts an increased influence of woman upon the course of public affairs.

PART X.—CHAPTER XXIX.

THE place which the Meredith's had chosen for their residence was Frascati, where everything was quieter, and most things cheaper, than in Rome,—to which, besides, the brother and sister had objections, founded on former passages in their family history, of which their new friends were but partially aware; and to Frascati, accordingly, the two Scotch pilgrims were drawn with them. Colin having, as usual, persevered in his own way, and obtained it, as Lauderdale prophesied, the arrangement came about, naturally enough, after the ten days' close company on board ship, when young Meredith, whom most people were either contemptuous of, or inclined to avoid, found refuge with his new friends, who, though they did not agree with him, at least understood what he meant. He slackened nothing of those exertions which he thought to be his duty,—and on which, perhaps unconsciously, the young invalid rather prided himself, as belonging to his *rôle* of dying man—during the remainder of the voyage; but, finding one of the sailors ill, succeeded in making such an impression upon the poor fellow's uninstructed and uncertain mind as repaid him, he said, for all the exertions he had made. After that event, he passed by very often to the forecastle to pray with his convert, being, perhaps, disposed to the opinion that they two were the salt of the earth to their small community; for which proceeding he was called fool, and fanatic, and Methodist, and a great many other hard names by the majority of his fellow-passengers,—some of whom, indeed, being, like most ordinary people, totally unable to discriminate between things that differ, confidently expected to hear of some secret vice on the part of Meredith; such things being always found out, as they maintained, of people who considered themselves better than their neighbors. "After a while, it will be found out what he's up to," said a comfortable passenger, who knew the world; "such fellows always have their private peccadilloes. I dare say he don't go so often to the forecastle for nothing. The stewardess aint bad-looking, and I've seen our saint engaged in private conversation when he didn't know I was there," said the large-minded Christian who denounced poor Meredith's uncharitableness. And, to be sure, he was uncharitable, poor fellow. As for Colin, and, indeed, Lauderdale also, who had been attracted, in spite of himself, they looked on with a wonderful interest, from amid-ships, knowing better. They saw him dragging his sister after him, as far as she could go, along the crowded deck, when he went to visit his patient,—neither he, whose thoughts were occupied solely with matters of life and death, nor she, who was thinking entirely of him, having any idea that the dark dormitory below, among the sailors' hammocks, was an unfit place for her. It was Colin who stepped forward to rescue the girl from this unnecessary trial, and Meredith gave her up to him, with as little idea that this, too, was a doubtful expedient, as he had had of anything unsuitable in his original intention. "It is a privilege, if she but knew it," the invalid would say, fixing his hollow eyes on her, as if half doubtful whether he approved of her or not; and poor Aliee stayed behind him, with a bad grace, without feeling much indebted on her own account to her new friends. "It does not matter where I go, so long as I am with him," she said, following him with her anxious looks; and she stopped seated patiently upon her bench, with her eyes fixed on the spot where he had disappeared, until he rejoined her. When Arthur's little prayer-meeting was ended, he came with a severe, and yet serene, countenance towards the sister he had left behind him, and the two friends who did not propose to accompany him. "He is a child of God," said the sick man; "his experiences are a great comfort to me"—and he looked with a little defiance at the companions, who, to be sure, so far as the carnal mind was concerned, were more congenial to him. Indeed, the new chapter of the "Voice from the grave" was all about Lauderdale and Colin. They were described under the initials N. and M., with a heightening of all their valuable qualities, which was intended to make more and more apparent their want of the "one thing needful." They were like the rich young man whom Jesus loved, but who had not the heart to give up all and follow him,—like "him who, through cowardice, made the great refusal." The sick man wrote without, however, quoting Dante, and he contrasted with their virtuous and thoughtful worldliness the condition of his convert, who knew nothing but the love of God, poor Meredith said. Perhaps it was true that the sick sailor knew

the love of God, and certainly the prayers of the dying apostle were not less likely to reach the ear of the Divine Majesty for being uttered by the poor fellow's bedside. But, though he wrote a chapter in his book about them, Meredith still clung to his friends. The unseen and unknown were familiar to their thoughts,—perhaps even too familiar, being considered by them as reasonably and naturally interesting; and poor Meredith was disposed to think that anything natural must be more or less wicked. But still he considered them interesting, and thought he might be able to do them good, and, for his own part, found all the human comfort he was capable of in their society. Thus it was that, with mutual companions and sympathy,—he sorry for them and they for him, and mutual good offices,—the three grew into friendship. As for Alice, her brother was fond of her, but had never had his attention specially attracted to her, nor been led to imagine her a companion for himself. She was his tender little nurse and attendant,—a creature made up of loving, watchful eyes, and anxious little noiseless cares. He would have missed her terribly, had she failed him, without quite knowing what it was he missed. But, though he was in the habit of instructing her now and then, it did not occur to him to talk to his sister. She was a creature of another species,—an unawakened soul, with few thoughts or feelings worth speaking of. At least such was the estimate her brother had formed of her, and in which Alice herself agreed to a great extent. It was not exactly humility that kept the anxious girl in this mind, but an undisturbed habit and custom, out of which no personal impulse had delivered her. The women of her kindred had never been remarkable one way or another. They were good women,—perfectly virtuous and a little tiresome, as even Alice was sensible; and it had not been the custom of the men of the house to consult or confide in their partners. Her mother and aunts had found quite enough to occupy them in housekeeping and needlework, and had accepted it as a matter of faith that men, except, perhaps, when in love, or in "a passion," did not care to talk to women,—a family creed from which so young and submissive a girl had not dreamt of enfranchising herself. Accordingly, she accepted quite calmly Arthur's low estimate of her powers of companionship, and was moved by no injured feeling when he sought the company of his new friends, and gave himself up to the pleasure of conversation. It was the most natural thing in the world to Alice. She kept by him, holding by his arm when he and his companions walked about the deck together, as long as there was room for her; and when there was no room, she withdrew and sat down on the nearest seat, and took out a little bit of needlework which never made any progress; for, though her intellect could not do Arthur any good, the anxious scrutiny of her eyes could,—or at least she seemed to think so. Very often, it was true, she was joined in her watch by Colin; of whom, however, it never occurred to her to think under any other possible aspect than that of Arthur's friend. Lauderdale might have spared his anxieties so far as that went; for, notwithstanding a certain proclivity on the part of Colin to female friendship, Alice was too entirely unconscious, too utterly devoid of any sense or feeling of self, to be interesting to the young man. Perhaps a certain amount of self-regard is necessary to attract the regard of others. Alice was not aware of herself at all, and her insensibility communicated itself to her silent companion. He sometimes even wondered if her intelligence was up to the ordinary level, and then felt ashamed of himself when by chance she lifted upon him her wistful eyes; not that those eyes were astonishingly bright, or conveyed any intimations of hidden power,—but they looked, as they were, unawakened, suggestive eyes, which might wake up at any moment and develop unthought-of lights. But, on the whole, this twilight was too dim to interest Colin, except by moments; and it was incomprehensible, and to some extent provoking and vexatious, to the young man, to see by his side a creature so young, and with so many natural graces, who neutralized them all by her utter indifference to herself.

So that, after all, it came to be a very natural and reasonable step to accompany the Mereditbs, to whose knowledge of the country and language even Lauderdale found himself indebted when suddenly thrown without warning upon the tumultuous crowd of Leghorn boatmen, which was his first foreign experience. "They all understand French," a benevolent fellow-passenger said, as he went

on before them; which did not convey the consolation it was intended to bear to the two Scotch travellers, who only looked at each other sheepishly, and laughed with a very mixed and doubtful sort of mirth, not liking to commit themselves. They had to give themselves up blindly into the hands of Meredith and his sister,—for Alice felt herself of some importance in a country where she "knew the language,"—and it was altogether in the train of these two that Colin and Lauderdale were dragged along, like a pair of English captives, through the very gates of Rome itself, and across the solemn Campagna to the little city set upon a hill, to which the sick man was bound. They made their way to it in a spring afternoon when the sun was inclining towards the west, throwing long shadows of those long, weird, endless arches of the Claudian aqueduct across the green wastes, and shining full upon the white specks of scattered villages on the Alban hills. The landscape would have been impressive, even had it conveyed no associations to the minds of the spectators. But, as the reluctant strangers left Rome, they saw unfold before them a noble semicircle of hills,—the Sabines, blue and mysterious, on one side, the Latin range breaking bluntly into the centre of the ring, and towards the right hand the softer Alban heights with their lakes hidden in the hollows, and the sunshine falling full upon their crest of towns; and, when they had mounted the steep ascent to Frascati, it was still more wonderful to look back and see the sunset arranging itself over that great Campagna, falling into broad radiant bands of color with inconceivable tints and shadings, betraying in a sudden flash the distant sea, and shining all misty and golden over the dwarfed dome of St. Peter's, which rose up by itself with a wonderful insignificance of grandeur,—all Rome around being blotted into oblivion. That would have been a sight to linger over, had not Meredith been weary and worn out, and eager to get to his journey's end. "You will see it often enough," he said, with a little petulance; "neither the sunset nor St. Peter's can run away:" for it was to himself a sufficiently familiar sight. They went in accordingly to a large house, which, a little to the disappointment of Colin, was just as square and ugly as anything he could have found at home, though it stood all the days and nights gazing with many eyes over that Campagna which looked like a thing to dream over forever. It was the third story of this house—the upper floor—to which Meredith and his sister directed their steps; Colin and Lauderdale following them, not without a little expectation, natural enough under the circumstances. It was cold, and they were tired, though not so much as the invalid; and they looked for a bright fire, a comfortable room, and a good meal,—with a little curiosity, it is true, about the manner of it, but none as to the blazing fire and spread board and all the other items indispensable to comfort, according to English ideas. The room where they got admittance was very large, and full of windows, letting in a flood of light, which, as the sunshine was now too low to enter, was cold light,—white, colorless, and chilling. Not a vestige of carpet was on the tiled floor, except before the fireplace, where a square piece of a curious coarse fabric and wonderful pattern had been laid down. A few logs were burning on the wide hearth, and close by was a little stack of wood intended to replenish the fire. The great desert room contained a world of tables and four uncushioned chairs; but the tired travellers looked in vain for the spread board which had pleased their imagination. If Colin had thought the house too like an ordinary ugly English house outside to satisfy him, he found this abundantly made up for now by the interior, so unlike anything English; for the walls were painted with a brilliant landscape set in a frame of brilliant scarlet curtains, which the simple-minded artist had looped across his sky without any hesitation; and underneath this most gorgeous bit of fresco was set a table against the wall, upon which were spread out an humble store of little brown rolls, a square slice of butter, a basin full of eggs, and a flask of oil,—the humble provisions laid in by the attendant Maria, who had rushed forward to kiss the young lady's hand when she opened the door. While the two inexperienced Scotch travellers stood horror-stricken, their companions, who were aware of what they were coming to, threw down their wraps and began to settle themselves in this extraordinary desert. Meredith for his part threw himself into a large primitive easy-chair which stood by the fire. "This is a comfort I did not look for," he said; "and, thank Heaven, here we are at last." He drew a long breath

of satisfaction as he stretched out his long, meagre limbs before the fire. "Come in and make yourselves comfortable. Alice will attend to everything else," he said, glaring back at his annoyed companions, who, finding themselves in some degree his guests, had to subdue their feelings. They came and sat by him, exchanging looks of dismay,—looks which, perhaps, he perceived; for he drew in his long, languid limbs, and made a little room for the others. "Many things, of course, that are necessary in our severe climate are unnecessary here," he said, with a slight shiver; and, as he spoke, he reached out his hand for one of the wraps he had thrown off, and drew it round his shoulders. That action gave a climax to the universal discomfort. Colin and Lauderdale once more looked at each other with mutual comments that could find no utterance in words,—the only audible expression of their mutual sentiment being an exclamation of "Climate!" from the latter in an undertone of unspeakable surprise and consternation. This, then, was the Italy of which they had dreamed! The mistress's parlor on the Holy Loch was words could not tell how much warmer and more genial. The tired travellers turned towards the fire as the only possible gleam of consolation, and Meredith put out his long, thin arm to seize another log and place it on the hearth; even he felt the difference. He had done nothing to help himself till he came here; but habits of indulgence dropped off on the threshold of this Spartan dwelling. Colin repeated within himself Lauderdale's exclamation, "Climate!" as he shivered in his chair. No doubt the invalid chair by the fireside on the banks of the Holy Loch was a very different thing, as far as comfort was concerned.

In the mean time Alice found herself in command of the position. Humble little woman as she was, there came by moments, even to her, a compassionate contempt for the male creatures who got hungry and sulky after this fashion, and could only sit down ill-tempered and disconsolate before the fire. Alice, for her part, sent off Maria to the trattoria, and cheerfully prepared to feed the creatures who did not know how to set about it for themselves. When she had done her utmost, however, there was still a look of dismay on Colin's face. The dinner from the trattoria was a thing altogether foreign to the experiences of the two Scotchmen. They suspected it while they ate, making secret wry faces to each other across the equivocal board. This was the land of poets into which they had come,—the land of the ideal where, according to their inexperienced imaginations, everything was to share the general refinement! But, alas, there was nothing refined about the dinner from the trattoria, which was altogether a native production, and with which the Mereditbs, being acquainted and knowing what they had to expect, contented themselves well enough. When Lauderdale and his charge retired, chilled to the bone, to their stony, chilly bedrooms, where everything seemed to convey not warmth but a sensation of freezing, they looked at each other with amazement and disgust on their faces. "Callant, you would have been twenty times better at home," said Lauderdale, with a remorseful groan; "and, as for those poor innocents who have nobody to look after them— but they kent what they were coming to," he continued, with a flash of momentary anger. Altogether it was as unsuccessful a beginning as could well be imagined of the ideal poetic Italian life.

CHAPTER XXX.

It is impossible to deny that, except in hotels which are cosmopolitan, and chiefly adapted to the many wants of the rich English, life in Italy is a hard business enough for the inexperienced traveller, who knows the strange country into which he has suddenly dropped rather by means of poetical legends than by the facts of actual existence. A country of vineyards and orange-groves, of everlasting verdure and sunshine is, indeed, in its way, a true enough description of a many-sided country: but these words of course convey no intimation of the terrors of an Italian palace in the depth of winter, when everything is stone-cold, and the possibilities of artificial warmth are of the most limited description; where the idea of doors and windows closely fitting has never entered the primitive mind, and where the cardinal virtue of patience and endurance of necessary evils wraps the contented native sufferer like the cloak which he hugs round him. Yet, notwithstanding, even Lauderdale relaxed out of the settled gloom on his face when he went to the window of the great bare sitting-room and gazed out upon the grand expanse

of the Campagna, lighted up with the morning sunshine. The silence of that depopulated plain, with its pathetic bits of ruin here and there,—ruins, to be sure, identified and written down in books, but for themselves speaking, with a more woful and suggestive voice than can be conveyed by any historical associations, through the very depths of their dumbness and loss of all distinction,—went to the spectator's heart. What they were or had been, what human hands had erected or human hearts rejoiced in them their lingering remains had ceased to tell; and it was only with a vagueness which is sadder than any story that they indicated a former forgotten existence, a past too far away to be decipherable. Lauderdale laid his hand on Colin's shoulder, and drew him away. "Ay, ay," he said, with an unusual thrill in his voice, "it's grand to hear that yon's Soracte, and thereaway is the Sabine country, and that's Rome, lying away among the clouds. It's no Rome, callant; it's a big kirk, or heathen temple, or whatever you like to call it. I'm no heeding about Rome. It's the awfu' presence of the dead, and the skies smiling at them—that's a' I see. Come away with me, and let's see if there's ony living creatures left. It's an awfu' thought to come into a man's head in connection with that bonnie innocent sky," the philosopher continued, with a slight shudder, as he drew his charge with him down the chilly staircase; "but it's aye bewildering to one to see the indifference o' Nature. It's terrible like as if she was a senseless heathen hersel', and cared nothing about nobody. No that I'm asserting that to be the case; but it's gruesome to look at her smiles and her wiles, as if she kent no better. I'm no addicted to little bairns in a general way," said Lauderdale, drawing a long breath, as he emerged from the great door, and suddenly found himself in the midst of a group of ragged little picturesque savages; "but it's aye a comfort to see that there's still living creatures in the world."

"It is not for the living creatures, however, that people come to Italy," said Colin. "Stop here and have another look at the Campagna. I am not of your opinion about nature. Sometimes tears themselves are less pathetic than a smile."

"Where did *you* learn that, callant?" said his friend. "But there's plenty of time for the Campagna, and I have aye an awfu' interest in human folk. What do the little animals mean, raging like a set of little furies? Laddies, if you've quarrelled, fight it out like men instead of scolding like a parcel of fishwives," said the indignant stranger, addressing himself to a knot of boys who were playing mona. When he found his remonstrance disregarded, Lauderdale seized what appeared to him the two ringleaders, and held them, one in each hand, with the apparent intention of knocking their heads together, entirely undisturbed by the outcries and struggles of his victims, as well as by the voluble explanations of the rest of the party. "It's no use talking nonsense to me," said the inexorable judge; "they shall either hold their tongues, the little cowardly wretches, or they shall fight!"

It was, luckily, at this moment that Alice Meredith made her appearance, going out to provide for the wants of her family like a careful little housewife. Her explanation filled Lauderdale with unbounded shame and dismay. "It's an awful drawback no to understand the language said the philosopher, with a rush of burning color to his face; for, Lauderdale, like various other people, could not help entertaining an idea, in spite of his better knowledge, that English (or what he was pleased to call English), spoken with due force and emphasis, was sure in the end to be perfectly intelligible. Having received this sad lesson, he shrank out of sight with the utmost discomfiture, holding Colin fast, who betrayed an inclination to accompany Alice. "This will never do; we'll have to put to our hands and learn," said Colin's guardian. "I never put much faith before in that Babel business. It's awfu' humbling to be made a fool of by a parcel of bairns." Lauderdale did not recover his humiliating defeat during the lengthened survey which followed of the little town and its dependencies, where now and then they encountered the slight little figure of Alice walking alone, with a freedom permitted (and wondered at) to the Signora Inglese, who thus declared her independence. They met her at the baker's, where strings of biscuits, made in the shape of rings, hung like garlands about the door, and where the little Englishwoman was using all her power to seduce the master of the shop into the manufacture of *pane Inglese*, bread made

with yeast instead of leaven; and they met her again in the dark vicinity of the trattoria, consulting with a dingy *traiteur* about dinner. Fortunately for the success of the meal, the strangers were unaware that it was out of these dingy shades that their repast was to come. Thus the two rambled about, recovering their spirits a little as the first glow of the Italian sunshine stole over them, and finding summer in the bright piazza, though winter and gloom lingered in the narrow streets. Last of all they entered the cathedral, which was a place the two friends approached with different feelings. Colin's mind being full of the curiosity of a man who was himself to be a priest, and who felt to a certain degree that the future devotions and even government of his country was in his hands, he was consequently quick to observe, and even, notwithstanding the prejudices of education, not disinclined to learn, if anything worth learning was to be seen in the quiet country church, where at present nothing beyond the ordinary service was going on. Lauderdale, in whose mind a lively and animated army of prejudices was in full operation, though met and crossed at every turn by an equally lively belief in the truth of his fellow-creatures,—which was a sad drawback to his philosophy,—went into the Frascati Cathedral with a curious mixture of open criticism and concealed respect, not unusual in a Scotchman. He was even ashamed of himself for his own alacrity in taking off his hat, as if one place could be holier than another; yet, nevertheless, stowed his gaunt, gigantic figure away behind the pillars, and did what he could to walk softly, lest he should disturb the devotions of one or two kneeling women, who, however, paused with perfect composure to look at the strangers without apparently being conscious of any interruption. As for Colin, he was inspecting the arrangements of the cathedral at his leisure, when a sudden exclamation from Lauderdale attracted his attention. He thought his friend had got into some new bewilderment, and hastened to join him, looking round first, with the helplessness of a speechless stranger in a foreign country, to see if there were any one near who could explain for them in case of necessity. When, however, Colin had joined his friend, he found him standing rapt and silent before a tombstone covered with lettering which was placed against the wall of the church. Lauderdale made a curious, unsteady sign, pointing to it, as Colin approached. It was a pompous Latin inscription, recording imaginary grandeurs which had never existed, and bearing the names of three British kings who never reigned. Neither of the spectators who thus stood moved and speechless before it had been brought up with any Jacobite tendencies,—indeed, Jacobite ideas had died out of all reality before either of them was born,—but Lauderdale, Whig and sceptic as he was, uttered hoarsely out of his throat the two words, "Prince Chairlie!" and then stood silent, gazing at the stone with its pompous Latin lies and its sorrowful human story, as if it had been, not an extinct family, but something of his own blood and kindred which had lain underneath. Thus the two strangers went out, subdued and silenced, from their first sight-seeing. It was not in man, nor in Scotchman, to see the names and not remember all the wonderful vain devotion, all the blind heroic efforts that had been made for these extinct Stuarts; and, with a certain instinctive loyalty, reverential yet protesting, Colin and his friend turned away from Charles Edward's grave.

"Well," said Lauderdale, after a long pause, "they were little to brag of, either for wisdom or honesty, and no credit to *us* that I can see; but it comes over a man with an awfu' strange sensation to fall suddenly without any warning on the grave of a race that was once in such active connection with his own. 'Jacobus III., Carolus III., Henricus IX.'—is that how it goes? It's terrible real, that inscription, though it's a' a fiction. They might be a feckless race; but, for a' that, it was awfu' hard, when you think of it, upon Prince Chairlie. He was neither a fool nor a liar, so far as I ever heard,—which is more than you can say for other members of the family; and he had to give way, and give up his birthright for the miserable little wretches from Hanover. I dinna so much wonder, when I think of it, at the '45. It was a pleasant alternative for a country, callant, to choose between a bit Dutch idiot that knew nothing, and the son of her auld kings. I'm no speaking of William of Orange,—he's awfu' overrated, and a cold-blooded demon, but aye a kind of a *man*

notwithstanding,—but thae Hanoverfellows—And soy on's Prince Chairlie's grave ! "

Just then Meredith, who had come out to bask in the sunshine, came up to them, and took, as he had learned to do by way of supporting himself, Lauderdale's vigorous arm.

" I forgot to tell you," he said, " that the Pretender's grave was there. I never enter these churches of Antichrist if I can help it. Life is too short to be wasted even in looking on at the wiles of the destroyer. Oh that we could do something to deliver these dying souls ! "

" I saw little of the wiles of the destroyer for my part," said Lauderdale, abruptly; " and, as for the Pretender, there's many pretenders, and it's awfu' hard to tell which is real. I know no harm of Prince Chairlie, the little I do know of him. If it had been mysel', I'm no free in my mind to say that I would have let go my father's inheritance without striking a blow."

" These are the ideas of the carnal mind," said Meredith. " Oh, my friend, if you would but be more serious ! Does not your arrival in this country suggest to you another arrival which cannot be long delayed,—which indeed, for some of us at least, may happen any day," the sick man continued, putting out his long, thin hand to clasp that of Colin, who was on the opposite side. Lauderdale, who saw this gesture, started aside with a degree of violence which prevented the meeting of the two invalid hands.

" I know little about this country," he said, almost with sullenness; " but I know still less about the other. It's easy for you, callants, to speak. I'm real willing to make experiment of it, if that were possible," he continued, softening; " but there's no an ignorant soul hereabouts that is more ignorant than me."

" Let us read together,—let us consider it together," said Meredith; " it is all set down very plain, you know. He that runneth may read. In all the world there is nothing so important. My friend, you took pains to understand about Italy "—

" And a bonnie business I made of it," said Lauderdale; " deluded by the very bairns; set free by one that's little more than a bairn, that little sister of yours; and not letting myself be drawn into discussions ! I'm twenty years, or near it, older than you are," he went on, " and I've walked with them that have gone away *yonder*, as far as flesh and blood would let me. I'm no misdoubting anything that's written, callant, if that will satisfy you. It's a' an awful, darkness with visions of white angels here and there; but the angels dinna belong to me. Whisht—whisht,—I'm no profane; I'm wanting more,—more than what's written; and, as I cannot get that, I must even wait till I see for myself.—Here's a grand spot for looking at your Campagna now," he said, breaking abruptly off; but poor Meredith, who had so little time to spare, and whose words had to be in season and out of season, could not consent to follow, as a man without so great a mission might have done, the leading of his companion's thoughts.

" The Campagna is very interesting," he said, " but it is nothing to the safety of your soul. Oh, my dear friend ! — and here is Campbell, too, who is not far from the kingdom of heaven. Promise me that you will come with me," said the dying man. " I shall not be able to stay long with you. Promise me that you will come and join me *there!*" He put out his thin arm, and raised it toward the sky, which kept smiling always serene, and took no note of these outbursts of human passion. " I will wait for you at the golden gates," the invalid went on, fixing his hollow eyes first on one and then on another. " You will be my joy and crown of rejoicing ! You cannot refuse the prayer of a dying man."

Colin, who was young, and upon whom the shadow of these golden gates was still hovering, held out his hand this time, touched to the heart. " I am coming," he said, softly, almost under his breath, but yet loud enough to catch the quick ear of Lauderdale, whose sudden movement displaced Meredith's arm, which was clinging almost like a woman's to his own.

" It's no for a man to make any such unfounded promises," said Lauderdale, hoarsely; " though you read till your heart's sick, there's nothing written like *that*. It's a' imaginations and yearnings and dreams. I'm no saying that it cannot be, or that it will not be, but I tell you there's no such thing written; and as far as I ken or you ken, it may be a delusion and disappointment. Whisht, whisht, callants ! Dinna entice each other out of this world, where there's aye plenty to do for the like of you.

I'm saying, —'Silence, sir!'" cried the philosopher, with sudden desperation. And then he became aware that he had withdrawn the support which Meredith stood so much in need of. "A sober-minded man like me should have other company than a couple of laddies, with their fancies," he said, in a hurried, apologetic tone; "but, as long as we're together, you may as well take the good of me," he added, with a rare, momentary smile, holding out his arm. As for Meredith, for once in his life,—partly because of a little more emotion than usual, partly because his weakness felt instantly the withdrawal of a support which had become habitual to him,—he felt beyond a possibility of doubt that further words would be out of season just at that moment, and so they resumed their way a little more silently than usual. The road, like other Italian roads, was marked by here and there a rude shrine in a niche in the wall, or a cross erected by the wayside,—neither of which objects possessed in the smallest degree the recommendation of picturesqueness which sentimental travellers attribute to them; for the crosses were of the rudest construction, as rude as if meant for actual use, and the poor little niches, each with its red-eyed Madonna daubed on the wall, suggested no more idea of beauty than the most arbitrary symbol could have done. But Meredith's soul awoke within him when he saw the looks with which Colin regarded these shabby emblems of religious feeling. The Protestant paused to regain his breath, and could keep silence no more.

"You look with interest at these devices of Antichrist," said the sick man. "You think they promote a love of beauty, I suppose, or you think them picturesque. You don't think how they ruin the souls of those who trust in them," he said, eagerly and loudly; for they were passing another English party, which was at the moment engaged in contemplating the cross, without much apparent admiration, and already the young missionary longed to accost them, and put the solemn questions about life and death to their (presumably) careless souls.

"They don't appear to me at all picturesque," said Colin; "and nobody looks at them that I can see except ourselves; so they can't ruin many souls. But you and I don't agree in all things, Meredith. I like the cross, you know. It does not seem to me to come amiss anywhere. Perhaps the uglier and ruder it is it becomes the more suggestive," the young man added, with a little emotion. "I should like to build a few crosses along our Scotch roads; if anybody was moved to pray, I can't see what harm would be done; or, if anybody was surprised by a sudden thought, it might be all the better even; one has heard of such a thing," said Colin, whose heart was still a little out of its usual balance. "A stray gleam of sunshine might come out of it here and there. If I was rich like some of you merchants, Lauderdale," he said, laughing a little, "I think, instead of a few fine dinners, I'd build a cross somewhere. I don't see that it would come amiss on a Scotch road"—

"I wish you would think of something else than Scotch roads," said Meredith, with a little vexation; "when I speak of things that concern immortal souls, you answer me something about Scotland. What is Scotland to the salvation of a fellow-creature? I would rather that Scotland, or England either, was sunk to the bottom of the sea than stand by and see a man dying in his sins."

The two Scotchmen looked at each other as he spoke; they smiled to each other with a perfect understanding, which conveyed another pang of irritation to the invalid, who by nature had a spirit which insisted upon being first and best beloved. "You see," said Lauderdale, who had entirely recovered his composure, "this callant, innocent as he looks, has a consciousness within him that Scotland's his kingdom. His meaning is to mould his generation with these feckless hands of his. It's a ridiculous aspiration," continued Colin's guardian, "but that makes it a' the more likely: he's thinking what he'll do when he comes into his kingdom. I wouldna say but he would institute decorations, and give crosses of honor like ony other potentate. That's what the callant means," said his friend, with pride which was very imperfectly hidden by his pretended sarcasm,—a speech which only made Meredith more impatient, and to which he had no clew. "I think we'd better go home," he said, abruptly. "I know Scotch pretty well, but can't quite follow when you speak on these subjects. I want to have a talk with Maria about her brother, who used to be

very religiously disposed. Poor fellow, he's ill now, and I've got something for him," said the young man. Here he paused, and drew forth from his pocket a sheet folded like a map, which he opened out carefully, looking first to see that there was nobody on the road. "They took them for maps at the dogana," said Meredith; "and geography is not prohibited,—to the English at least; but this is better than geography. I mean to send it to poor Antonio, who can read, poor fellow." The map, which was no map, consisted of a large sheet of paper, intended apparently to be hung upon a wall, and containing the words, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden," translated into Italian. It was not without a little triumph that Meredith exhibited this effort at clandestine instruction. "He has to lie in bed," he said, with a softened inflection of his voice; "this will console him and bear him company. It is a map of his future inheritance," the young missionary concluded, putting it fondly back into its deceitful folds; and after this there was an uneasy pause, no one quite knowing what to say.

"You fight Antichrist with his own weapons, then," said Colin, "and do evil that good may come,"—and Lauderdale added his comment almost in the same breath,—

"That's an awfu' fruitful principle if you once adopt it," he said; "there's no telling where it may end. I would sooner leave the poor lad in God's hands, as no doubt he is, than smuggle in light to him after that fashion. I'm no fond of maps that are no maps," said the dissatisfied critic; by which time Colin had reloaded his guns, and was ready to fire.

"It is short enough," said Colin; "a man might keep such an utterance in his memory without any necessity for double dealing. Do you think, for all the good it will do your patient to look at that text, it is worth your while to risk him and yourself?"

"For myself I am perfectly indifferent," said Meredith, glad of an opportunity to defend himself. "I hope I could take imprisonment joyfully for the saving of a soul."

"Imprisonment would be death to you," said Colin, with a touch of compunction, "and would make an end of all further possibilities of use. To be thrown into a stony Italian prison at this season"—

"Hush," said Meredith; "for my Master's sake could I not bear more than that? If not, I am not worthy to call myself a Christian. I am ready to be offered," said the young enthusiast. "It would be an end beyond my hopes to die like my Lord for the salvation of my brother. Such a prophecy is no terror to me."

"If you two would but hold your tongues for five minutes at a time," said Lauderdale, with vexation, "it would be a comfort. No doubt you're both ready enough to fling away your lives for any nonsensical idea that comes into your heads. Suppose we take the case of the other innocent callant, the Italian lad that a' this martyrdom's to be for. No to say that it's awfu' cheating,—which my soul loathes," said the emphatic Scotchman,—"figure to yourself a wheen senseless women maybe, or a wheen frightened priests, getting on the scent o' this heresy of yours. I'm real reluctant to think that he would not get the same words, poor callant, in his ain books without being torn to pieces for the sake of a map that was not a map. It's getting a wee chilly," said the philosopher, "and there's a fire to be had in the house if nothing else. Come in, callant, and no expose yourself; and you would put your grand map in the fire if you were to be guided by me."

"With these words of consolation on it!" said Meredith. "Never, if it should cost me my life."

"Nae fear of its costing you your life; but I wouldna use even the weapons of God after the devil's manner of fighting," said Lauderdale, with a little impatience. "Allowing you had a' the charge of saving souls, as you call it, and the Almighty himself took no trouble on the subject, I'm no for using the sword o' the Spirit to give stabs in the dark."

Just then, fortunately, there came a seasonable diversion, which stayed the answer on Meredith's lips.

"Arthur, we are going to dine early,' said the voice of Alice just behind them; "the doctor said you were to dine early. Come and rest a little before dinner. I met some people just now who were talking of Mr. Campbell. They were wondering where he lived, and saying they had seen him somewhere. I told them you were with us," the

girl went on, with the air of a woman who might be Colin's mother. "Will you please come home in case they should call?"

This unexpected intimation ended the ramble and the talk, which was of a kind rather different from the tourist talk which Colin had shortly to experience from the lips of his visitors, who were people who had seen him at Wodensbourne, and who were glad to claim acquaintance with anybody in a strange country. Little Alice received the ample English visitors still with the air of being Colin's mother, or mature protecting female friend, and talked to the young lady daughter, who was about half as old again as herself with an indulgent kindness which was beautiful to behold. There were a mother, father, daughter, and two sons, moving about in a compact body, all of whom were exceedingly curious about the quaint little brotherhood which, with Alice for its protecting angel, had taken possession of the upper floor of the Palazzo Savvielli. They were full of a flutter of talk about the places they had visited, and of questions as to whether their new acquaintances had been here or there; and the ladies of the party made inquiries after the Frankland family, with a friendly significance which brought the blood to Colin's cheeks. "I promised Matty to write, and I shall be sure to tell her I have seen you, and all about it," the young lady said, playfully. Was it possible, or was it a mere reflection from his own thoughts, throwing a momentary gleam across her unimpassioned face? Anyhow, it occurred to Colin that the little abstract Alice looked more like an ordinary girl of her years for the five minutes after the tourist party, leaving wonderful silence and sense of relief behind them, had disappeared down the chilly stone stairs.

CHAPTER XXXI.

It is not to be inferred from what has just been said that it had become a matter of importance to Colin how Alice Meredith looked. On the contrary, the relations between the two young people grew more distant instead of becoming closer. It was Lauderdale with whom she talked about the domestic arrangements, which he and she managed together; and indeed it was apparent that Alice, on the whole, had come to regard Colin, in a modified degree, as she regarded her brother —as something to be taken care of, watched, fed, tended, and generally deferred to, without any great possibility of comprehension or fellowship. Lauderdale, like herself, was the nurse and guardian of his invalid. Though she lost sight of him altogether in the discussions which perpetually arose among the three (which was not so much from being unable to understand these discussions as from the conclusion made beforehand that she had nothing to do with them), it was quite a different matter when they fell into the background to consult what would be best for their two charges. Then Alice was the superior, and felt her power. She talked to her tall companion with all the freedom of her age, accepting his as that of a grandfather at least, to the amusement of the philosopher, to whom her chatter was very pleasant. All the history of her family (as he imagined) came unawares to Lauderdale's ears in this simple fashion, and more of Alice's own mind and thoughts than she had the least idea of. He walked about with her as the lion might have done with Una, with a certain mixture of superiority and inferiority, amusement and admiration. She was only a little girl to Lauderdale, but a delightsome thing in her innocent way; and, so far from approving of Colin's indifference, there were times when he became indignant at it, speculating impatiently on the youthful folly which did not recognize good fortune when it saw it. "Of all women in the world the wife for the callant, if he only would make use of his een," Lauderdale said to himself; but so far from making use of his eyes, it pleased Colin, with the impertinence of youth, to turn the tables on his mentor, and to indulge in unseasonable laughter, which sometimes had all but offended the graver and older man. Alice, however, whose mind was bent upon other things, was none the wiser, and for her own part found "Mr. Lauderdale" of wonderful service to her. When they sat making up their accounts at the end of the week, Alice with her little pencil putting everything down in pauls and scudi, which Lauderdale elaborately did into English money as a preliminary to the exact division of expenses which the two careful housekeepers made, the sight was pleasant enough. By times it occurred that Alice, dreadfully puzzled by her companion's Scotch, but bound

in chains of iron by her good breeding, which coming direct from the heart was of the most exquisite type, came stealing up to Colin, after a long interview with his friend, to ask the meaning of a word or two preserved by painful mnemonic exercises in her memory; and she took to reading the Waverley novels by way of assisting her in this new language; but, as the only available copies of these works were in the shape of an Italian translation, it may be imagined that her progress was limited. Meanwhile, Meredith lived on as best he could, poor fellow, basking in the sun in the middle of the day, and the rest of his time sitting close to the fire with as many pillows and cloaks in his hard, old-fashioned easy-chair as might have sufficed for Siberia; and, indeed, it was a kind of Siberian refuge which they had set up in the top floor of the empty cold palace, the other part of which was used for a residence only during the hot season, and adapted to the necessities of a blazing Italian summer. For the Italian winter,—often so keen and penetrating, with its cutting winds that come from the mountains, and those rapid and violent transitions which form the shadow to its sunshine,—there, as elsewhere, little provision had been made; and the surprise of the inexperienced travellers, who had come there for warmth and the genial atmosphere, and found themselves suddenly plunged into a life of Spartan endurance,—of deadly chill and iciness indescribable,—has been already described. Yet neither of them would consent to go into Rome, where comfort might be had by paying for it, and leave the brother and sister alone in this chilly nest of theirs. So they remained together on their lofty perch, looking over the great Campagna, witnessing such sunsets and grandness of cloud and wind as few people are privy to all their lifetime; watching the gleams of snow appear and disappear over the glorious purple depths of the Sabine hills, and the sun shooting golden arrows into the sea, and gloom more wonderful still than the light, rolling on like an army in full march over that plain which has no equal. All these things they watched and witnessed, with comments of all descriptions, and with silence better than any comment. In themselves they were a strange little varied company; one of them, still in the middle of life, but to his own consciousness done with it, and watching the present actors as he watched the sunsets; two of them entirely full of undeveloped prospects in the world which was so familiar and yet so unknown; the last of all making his way steadily with few delays into a world still more unknown,—a world which they all by times turned to investigate, with speculations, with questions, with enthusiastic anticipation, with profound childlike faith. Such was their life up among the breezes across the soft slopes of the Alban hills; and in the midst of everything more serious, of opening life and approaching death, Lauderdale and Alice sat down together weekly to reckon up their expenses in Italian and English money, and keep their accounts straight, as the little house-wife termed it, with the world.

During this wintry weather, however, the occupations of the party were not altogether limited to these weekly accounts. Meredith, though he had been a little startled by the surprise shown by his companion at the too ingenious device of the map,—which, after all was not his device, but that of some Tract Society, or other body more zealous than scrupulous,—had not ceased his warnings, in season and out of season. He talked to Maria about dying, in a way which inspired that simple woman to the unusual exertion of a pilgrimage to Tivoli, where the kind Madonna had just been proved upon ample testimony to have moved her eyes, to the great comfort and edification of the faithful. "No doubt, it would be much better to be walking about all day among the blessed saints in heaven, as the Signor Arturo gives himself the trouble of telling me," Maria said, with anxiety in her face, "but *vedi, cara signorina mia*, it would be very inconvenient at the beginning of the season;" and, indeed, the same opinion was commonly expressed by Arthur's Italian auditors, who had, for the most part, affairs on hand, which did not admit of immediate attention to such a topic. Even the good-natured friars at Cape Cross declined to tackle the young Englishman after the first accost: for they were all of opinion that dying was business to be got over in the most expeditious manner possible, not to be dwelt on either by unnecessary anxiousness before or lingering regret after; and, as for the inevitable event itself, there were the last sacraments to make all right—though, indeed, the English invalid, *povero infelice*, might

well make a fuss about a matter which must be so hopeless to him. This was all the fruit he had of his labors, there being at that time no enterprising priest at hand to put a stop to the discussions of the heretic. But, at the same time, he had Colin and Lauderdale close at hand, and was using every means in his power to "do them good," as he said; and still, in the quiet nights, when the cold and the silence had taken entire possession of the great, vacant house and the half-frozen village, poor Meredith dragged his chair and his table closer to the fire, and drew his cloak over his shoulders, and added yet another and another chapter to his "Voice from the Grave."

As for Colin, if he had been a *litterateur* by profession, it is likely that, by this time, he would have begun to compile "Letters from Italy," like others of the trade; but being only a Scotch scholar, the happy holder of a Snell bursary, he felt himself superior to such temptations; though, indeed, after a week's residence at Frascati, Colin secretly felt himself in a condition to let loose his opinions about Italian affairs in general. In the mean time, however, he occupied himself in another fashion. Together, he and his watchful guardian made pilgrimages into Rome. They went to see everything that it was right to go to see: but over and above that, they went into the churches,—into all manners of churches out of the way, where there were no grand functions going on, but only every-day worship. Colin was not a watchful English divine spying upon the superstition of Rome, nor a rampant Protestant finding out her errors and idolatries. He was the destined priest of a nation in a state of transition and renaissance, which had come to feel itself wanting in the balance after a long period of self-complacency. With the instinct of a budding legislator and the eagerness of youth, he watched the wonderful scene he had before him,—not the pope, with his peacock feathers, and purple and scarlet followers, and wonderful audience of heretics, —not high masses in great basilicas, nor fine processions, nor sweet music. The two Scotsmen made part of very different assemblies in those Lenten days, and even in the joyful time of Easter, when carriages of the English visitors, rushing to the ceremonies of the week, made the narrow Roman streets almost impassable. Perhaps it was a feeling of a different kind which drew the two strangers to the awful and solemn temple, where once the heathen gods were worshipped, and where Raphael rests; but let artists pardon Colin, whose own profession has associations still more lofty than theirs, if, on his second visit, he forgot Raphael, and even the austere nobility of the place. An humble congregation of the commonest people about,—people not even picturesque,—women with shawls over their heads, and a few of the dreamy poor old men who seem to spend their lives about Italian churches, were dotted over the vast floor, kneeling on those broken marbles which are as old as Christianity,—some dropped at random in the middle, beneath the wonderful blue breadth of sky which looked in upon their devotions, some about the steps of the little altars round, and a little group about the special shrine where vespers were being sung. A lover of music would not have found a voice worth listening to in the place, and perhaps neither time nor tune was much attended to; but there was not a soul there, from the faint old men to the little children, who did not, according to his capabilities, take up the response, which was to every one, apparently, matter as familiar as an every-day utterance. These worshippers had no books, and did not need any. It might be words in a dead language; it might be partially understood, or not understood at all; but at least it was known and familiar as no religious service is in England, notwithstanding all our national vaunt of the prayer-book, and as nothing could be in Scotland, where we have no guide (save "the minister") to our devotion. When Colin, still weak and easily fatigued, withdrew a little, and sat down upon the steps of the high altar to listen, with a kind of shame in his heart at being unable to join those universal devotions, there came to his ear a wonderful chime of echoes from the great dome, which sent his poetic heart astray in spite of itself; for it sounded to the young dreamer like another unseen choir up there, who could tell of what spectators and assistants?—wistful voices of the past, coming back to echo the Name which was greater than Jove or Apollo. And then he returned to his legislative thoughts, to his dreams, patriotic and priestly, to his wondering, incredulous question with himself whether worship so familiar and so general, so absolutely a part of their daily

existence, could ever be known to his own people. Such a thought, no doubt, had it been known, would almost have warranted the withdrawal of the Snell scholarship, and certainly would have deferred indefinitely Colin's chances of obtaining license from any Scotch Presbytery. But, fortunately, Presbyterians are little interested in investigating what takes place in the Pantheon at Rome—whether old Agrippa breathes a far-off Amen out of the dome of his dead magnificence, to the worship of the Nazarene, as Colin thought in his dreams; or what vain imaginations may possess the soul of a wandering student there. He was aroused abruptly out of these visions by the English party who had visited him at Frascati, and who came up to salute him now with that frank indifference to other people for which our nation is said to be pre-eminent. They shook hands with him all round, for they were acquainted with his story, and Colin was of the kind of man to make people interested in him; and then they began to talk.

"A sad exhibition this, is it not, Mr. Campbell?" said the mother; "one forgets how dreadful it is, you know, when one sees it in all its grandeur,—its fine music, and silver trumpets, and so forth; but it is terrible to see all these poor creatures, and to think they know no better. Such singing! There is not a charity school at home that would do so badly, and they speak of music in Italy!" said the English matron, who indeed in her last observation had some truth on her side.

"Hush," said Colin, who was young, and not above saying a fine thing when he could; "listen to the echo. Are there some kind angels in the dome, do you think, to mend the music? or is it the poor old heathens who hang about for very wistfulness, and say as good an Amen as they can, poor souls? Listen; I have heard no music like it in Rome."

"Oh, Mr. Campbell, what a beautiful idea!" said the young lady; and then, the service being ended, they walked about a little, and looked up from the centre of the place to the blue wintry sky, which forms the living centre of that vault of ages,—an occupation which Lauderdale interrupted hurriedly enough by reminding Colin that they had still to get out to Frascati, and were already after time.

"Oh! you still live in Frascati," said Colin's acquaintance, "with that very strange young man? I never spoke to anybody in my life who startled me so much. Do you happen to know if he is a son of that very strange Mr. Meredith, whom there was so much talk of last year?—that man, you know, who pretended to be so very good, and ran away with somebody. Dear me, I thought everybody knew that story. His son was ill, I know, and lived abroad. I wonder if it is the same."

"I don't think my friend has any father," said Colin, who, stimulated by the knowledge that the last train would start in half an hour, was anxious to get away.

"Ah, well, I hope so, I am sure, for your sake; for *that* Mr. Meredith was a dreadful man, and pretended to be so good till he was found out," said the lady. "Something Hall was the name of his place. Let me recollect. Dear me, does nobody know the name?"

"Good-by; it is over time," said Colin, and he obeyed the gesture of Lauderdale, and rushed after his already distant figure; but, before he had turned the corner of the square, one of the sons overtook him. "I beg your pardon, but my mother wishes you to know that it was Meredith of Moreby she was talking of just now," said the young man out of breath. Colin laughed to himself as he hastened after his friend. What had he to do with Meredith of Moreby? But as he dashed along, he began to recollect an ugly story in the papers, and to bethink himself of a certain odd prejudice which he had been conscious of on first hearing the name of the brother and sister. When he got near enough to Lauderdale to lay hold of his arm, Colin could not help uttering, as was usual to him, what was at present on the surface of his mind.

"You know all about them," he said; "do you think they have a father?" which simple words were said with a few gasps, as he was out of breath.

"What's the use of coming after me like a steam-engine?" said Lauderdale; "did you think I would run away? and you've need of a' your breath for that weary brae. How should I ken all about them? They're your friends and not mine."

"All very well, Lauderdale; but she never makes *me* her confidant," said the young man with his usual laugh.

"It's no canny to speak of *she*," said Lauderdale: "it's awfu' suggestive, and no a word for either you or me. She has an aunt in India, and two uncles that died in the Crimea, if you want to know exactly. That is all she has ever told to me."

And with this they dismissed the subject from their minds, and, arm in arm, addressed themselves to the arduous task of getting to the station through the narrow crowded streets in time for the train.

PART XI.—CHAPTER XXXII.

THE fatigue of sight-seeing, wound up by a frantic rush to the railway to be in time for the train, which after all was a train quite at leisure, as most passengers are in Italy, was too much for the early budding of Colin's strength, and laid him up for a day or two, as was only natural, an occurrence which had a curious effect upon the little household. To Lauderdale it was a temporary return into those mists of despair which, partly produced by the philosopher's own sad experience, had made him at first come to so abrupt a conclusion touching Colin's chances of life. When he saw him once more prostrated, Lauderdale's patience and courage alike gave way. He became like a man in a sinking ship, who has not composure to await the end which is naturally at hand, but flings himself into the sea to meet it. He talked wildly of going home, and bitterly of the utter privation of comfort to which his invalid was exposed; and his heart was closed for the moment even to the approaches of Alice. "If it hadna been for you!" he said within his clinched teeth, turning away from her, and was not safe to speak to for the moment. But, oddly enough, the effect of Colin's illness upon the others was of an entirely different character. Instead of distressing Meredith and his sister, it produced, by some wonderful subtile action which we do not pretend to explain, an exhilarating effect upon them. It seemed to prove, somehow, to Alice especially, that illness was a general evil distributed over all the world; that it was a usual thing for young men to be reduced to weakness and obliged to be careful of themselves. "Mr. Campbell, you see, is just the same as Arthur. It is a great deal commoner than one thinks," the poor little girl said to Sora Antonia, who had charge of the house; and though her feelings towards Colin were of the most benevolent and even affectionate description, this thought was a sensible consolation to her. Meredith regarded the matter from a different point of view. "I have always hoped that he was one of the chosen," the invalid said, when he heard of Colin's illness; "but I found that God was leaving him alone. We always judge his ways prematurely even when we least intend it. We ought to thank God that our dear friend is feeling his hand, and is subject to chastisements which may lead him to Christ."

"Callant," said Lauderdale, fiercely, "speak of things ye understand; it's not for you to interfere between a man and his Maker. A soul more like Him of whom you dare to speak never came out of the Almighty's hands. Do you think God is like a restless woman and never can be done meddling?" said Colin's guardian, betrayed out of his usual self-restraint; but his own heart was trembling for his charge, and he had not composure enough to watch over his words. As for the sick man, whose own malady went steadily on without any great pauses or sudden increase, he lifted his dying eyes and addressed himself eagerly, as he was wont, to his usual argument.

"If any man can understand it, I should," said Meredith. "Can I not trace the way by which he has led *me*?—a hard way to flesh and blood. Can I not see how he has driven me from one stronghold after another, leaving me no refuge but in Christ? And, such being the case, can you wonder that I should wish the same discipline to my friend? The only thing I should fear for myself is restoration to health; and are you surprised that I should fear it for him?"

"I am not surprised at anything but my ain idiocy in having any hand in the matter," said Lauderdale, and he went away abruptly to Colin's room with a horrible sense of calamity and helplessness. There was something in the invalid's confident explanation of God's dealings which drove him half frantic, and filled him with an unreasonable panic. Perhaps it was true; perhaps those lightnings in the clouds had been but momentary—a false hope. When, however, with his agitation so painfully compressed and kept under that it produced a morose expression upon his grave face, he went into Colin's room, he found his patient sitting up in bed, with his great-coat over his shoulders, writing with a pencil on the fly-leaf of the book which his faithful attendant had given him to "keep him quiet."

"Never mind," said the disorderly invalid. "I am all right, Lauderdale. Give us pen and ink, like a kind soul. You don't imagine I am ill, surely, because I am lazy after last night?"

"I've given up imagining anything on the

subject," said Colin's grim guardian. "When a man in his senses sets up house with a parcel of lunatics, it's easy to divine what will come of it. Lie down in your bed and keep quiet, and get well again; or else get up," said Lauderdale, giving vent to a sharp, acrid sound, as if he had gnashed his teeth, "and let us be done with it all, and go home."

At this Colin opened his quiet brown eyes, which were as far from being anxious or depressed as could well be conceived, and laughed softly in his companion's face.

"This comes of Meredith's talk, I suppose," he said; "and of course it has been about me, or it would not have riled you. How often have you told me that you understood the state of mind which produced all that? He is very good at the bottom, Lauderdale," said Colin. "There's a good fellow, give me my little writing-case. I want to write it out."

"You want to write what out?" asked Lauderdale. "Some of your nonsense verses? I'll give you no writing-case. Lie down in your bed and keep yourself warm. You're awfu' fond of looking at your ain productions. I've no doubt it's terrible rubbish if a man could read it. Let's see the thing. Do you think a parcel of verses in that halting 'In Memoriam' metre—I'm no saying anything against 'In Memoriam;' but if *I* set up for a poet, I would make a measure for mysel'—is worth an illness? and the cold of this wretched place is enough to kill any rational man. Eétaly! I wouldna send a dog here, to be perished with cold and hunger. Do what I tell you, callant, and lie down. It shows an awfu' poverty of invention, that desire to copy everything out."

"Stuff!" said Colin; "you don't suppose it is for myself. I want to give it to somebody," said the young man, with a conscious smile. And to look at him with his countenance all aglow, pleasure and fun and affection brightening the eyes which shone still with the gentle commotion of thoughts terminating in that writing of verses, it was hard to consider him a man whom God for a solemn purpose had weighted with affliction,—as he had appeared in Meredith's eyes. Rather he looked, what he was, one of God's most joyful and gifted creatures; glad without knowing why,—glad because the sweet imaginations of youth had possession of him, and filled heaven and earth with brave apparitions. Love and curiosity had introduced into the heart of Lauderdale, as far as Colin was concerned, a certain feminine element, and he laughed unsteadily out of a poignant thrill of relief and consolation, as he took the book from his patient's hands.

"He's no a callant that can do without an audience," said Lauderdale; "and, seeing it's poetry that's in question, no doubt it's a female audience that's contemplated. You may spare yourself the trouble, Colin. She's bonnie, and she's good; and I'm no free to say that I don't like her all the better for caring for none of these things; but I see no token that she'll ever get beyond Watts's hymns all her days. You needna trouble your head about writing out things for her."

Upon which Colin reddened a little, and said "stuff!" and made a long grasp at the writing-case; which exertion cost him a fit of coughing. Lauderdale sat in the room gloomily enough all day, asking himself whether the color was hectic that brightened Colin's cheeks, and listening to the sound of his breathing and the ring of his voice with indescribable pangs of anxiety. When evening came, the watcher had considerably more fever than the patient, and turned his eyes abroad over the Campagna, with a gaze which saw nothing glorious in the scene. At that moment the sun going down in grandeur over the misty distance, which was Rome—the wonderful belts and centres of color in the vault of sky which covered in that melancholy waste with its specks of ruin—were nothing in Lauderdale's eyes in comparison with the vision that haunted him of a cosy, homely room in a Scotch farmhouse, full of warm glimmers of firelight and hearth comforts. "He would mend if he were but at home," he said to himself, almost with bitterness, turning his eyes from the landscape without, to which he was indifferent, to the bare white stony walls within. He was so cold sitting there,—he who was well and strong,—that he had put on his great-coat. And it was for this he had brought the youth whom he loved so far away from those "who belonged to him"! Lauderdale thought with a pang of the mistress and what she would say if she could see the comfortless place to which she had sent her boy. Meanwhile, the patient who caused so much anxiety was for his own part very comfortable, and copied out his

verses with a care that made it very apparent he had no intention of coming to a speedy end, either of life or its enjoyments. He had not written anything for a long time, and the exercise was pleasant to him; and when he had finished, he lay back on his pillows, and took the trouble to remark to Lauderdale upon the decorations of the poor, bare, stony chamber which the philosopher was cursing in his heart. "We are before them in some things," said Colin, reflectively; "but they beat us in a great many. See how simply that effect is obtained,—just a line or two of color, and yet nothing could be more perfect in its way." To which observation Lauderdale responded only by an indescribable growl, which provoked the laughter of his unruly patient. The next observation Colin made was, however, received with greater favor; for he asked plaintively if it were not time for dinner,—a question more soothing to Lauderdale's feelings than volumes of remonstrances. He carried Colin's portion into the room when that meal arrived from the Trattoria, scorning female assistance, and arranging everything with that exquisite uncouth tenderness which, perhaps, only a woman could do full justice to; for the fact is that Colin, though ravenously hungry, and fully disposed to approve of the repast, had a momentary thought that to have been served by the little housekeeper herself, had that been possible, would have been ever so much pleasanter. When the darkness had hushed and covered up the Campagna, and stilled all the village sounds, Lauderdale himself, a little flushed from an address he had just been delivering to Meredith, went in and looked at the sleeping face which was so precious to him, and tortured himself once more with questions whether it might be fever which gave color to the young man's cheek. But Colin, notwithstanding his cold, was breathing full, long breaths, with life in every inspiration, and his friend went not uncomforted to bed. While Colin lay thus at rest, Meredith had resumed his writing, and was working into his current chapter the conversation which had just taken place. "The worldly man asks if the afflictions of the just are signs of favoritism on God's part," wrote the young author, "and appeals to us whether a happy man is less beloved of his Father than I am who suffer. He virtually contradicts Scripture, and tells me that the Lord does *not* scourge every one whom he receiveth. But I say, and the Holy Bible says with me, Tremble, O ye who are happy; our troubles are God's tokens of love and mercy to our souls." As he wrote this, the young eyes, which were so soon to close upon life, heightened and expanded with a wonderful glow. His mind was not broad, nor catholic, nor capable of perceiving the manifold diversity of those ways of God which are beyond the comprehension of men. He could not understand how, upon the last and lightest laborer, the Master of the vineyard might bestow the equal hire, and—taking that as the hardest labor which fell to his own share—was bent at least on making up for it by the most supreme compensation. And indeed, it was hard to blame him for claiming, by way of balance to his afflictions, a warmer and closer share in the love of God. At least, that was no vulgar recompense. As for the "worldly man" of Arthur's paragraph, he, too, sat a long while in his chamber, not writing, but pondering,—gazing into the flame of the tall Roman lamp on his table as if some solution of the mysteries in his thoughts were to be found in its smoky light. To identify Lauderdale in this character would have been difficult enough to any one who knew him; yet, to Meredith, he had afforded a perfect example of "carnal reasoning," and the disposition which is according to the flesh and not according to the spirit. This worldly-minded individual sat staring into the lamp, even after his young critic had ceased to write,—revolving things that he could see were about to happen, and things which he dreaded without being able to see; and more than all, wondering over that awful mystery of Providence to which the young invalid gave so easy a solution. "It wouldna be so hard to make out if a man could think he was less loved than his fellows, as they thought langsyne," said Lauderdale to himself, "or more loved, as, twisting certain Scriptures, it's the fashion to say now; but it's awfu' ill to understand such dealings in him that is the Father of all and makes nae favorites. Poor callant! it's like he'll be the first to find the secret out." And as he pondered, he could not restrain a groan over the impending fate which threatened Meredith, and on the complications that were soon to follow. To be sure, he had

nothing particular to do with it, however it might happen; but every kind of Christian tenderness and charity lurked in the heart of the homely Scotch philosopher who stood in Arthur Meredith's last chapter as the impersonation of the worldly man.

Next day Colin reappeared, to the astonishment of the brother and sister. Let us not say to their disappointment; and yet poor little Alice, underneath her congratulations, said to herself with a pang, "He has got well,—they all get well but Arthur;" and when she was aware of the thought, hated herself, and wondered wistfully whether it was because of her wickedness that her prayers for Arthur were not heard. Anxiety and even grief are not the improving influences they are sometimes thought to be,—and it is hard upon human nature to be really thankful for the benefits which God gives to others, passing over one's self. Meredith, who was a sufferer in his own person, could afford to be more generous. He said, "I am glad you are better," with all his heart; and then he added, "The Lord does not mean to leave you alone, Campbell. Though he has spared you, he still continues his warnings. Do not neglect them, I beseech you, my dear friend"—before he returned to his writing. He was occupied now day and night with his "Voice from the Grave." He was less able to walk, less able to talk, than he had been, and now, as the night came fast in which no man can work, was devoting all his time and all his feeble strength to this last message to the world.

It would have been pitiful enough to any indifferent spectator to note the contrast between the sick man's solemn labor apart and the glow of subdued pleasure in Colin's face as he drew his seat in the evening towards the table which Alice had chosen for herself. The great bare room had so much space and so many tables, and there was so large a stock of lamps among the movables of the house, that each of the party had a corner for himself, to which (with his great-coat on or otherwise) he could retire when he chose. The table of Alice was the central point; and as she sat with the tall, antique lamp throwing its primitive unshaded light upon her, still and graceful with her needlework, the sight of her was like that of a supreme *objet de luxe* in the otherwise bare apartment. Perhaps, under due protection and control, the presence of womankind, thus calm, thus silent,—letting itself, as the old maxim commanded, be seen and not heard,—is to men of sober mind and middle age—such as Lauderdale, for example—the most agreeable ornament with which a room could be provided. Younger individuals might prefer that the tableau should dissolve, and the impersonation of womankind melt into an ordinary woman. Such at heart was the feeling of Colin. She was very sweet to look at; but if she had descended from her pedestal, and talked a little and laughed a little, and even, perhaps—but the idea of anything like flirtation on the part of Alice Meredith was too absurd an idea to be entertained for a moment. However, abstracted and preoccupied as she was, she was still a woman, young and pretty, and Colin's voice softened and his eyes brightened as he drew his chair to the other side of the lamp, and looked across the table at her soft, downcast face. "I have something here I want you to look at," said the young poet, who had been used to Matty Frankland's sympathy and curiosity; "not that it is much worth your while; but Lauderdale told you that writing verses was a weakness of mine," he went on, with a youthful blush and smile. As for Alice, she took the paper he gave her, looking a little frightened, and held it for a moment in her hand.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Campbell; am I to read it?" she said, with puzzled, uncertain looks. Naturally enough she was perplexed and even frightened by such an address; for, as Lauderdale said, her knowledge of poetry was confined to hymns, over which hung an awful shadow from "Paradise Lost." She opened Colin's "copy of verses" timorously as she spoke, and glanced at them, and stumbled at his handwriting, which, like most other people's in these scribbling days, was careless and indistinct. "I am sure it is very pretty," faltered Alice, as she got to the end of the page; and then, more timidly still, "What am I to do with it, Mr. Campbell?" asked the poor girl. When she saw the sudden flush that covered his face, Alice's slumbering faculties were wakened up by the sharp shock of having given pain, which was a fault which she had very seldom consciously committed in the course of her innocent life.

Colin was too much a gentleman to lose his temper; but it is impossible to deny that the effort which he had to make to keep it

was a violent one, and required all his manhood. "Keep it if you like it," he said, with a smile which thinly covered his mortification; "or put it in the fire if you don't." He said this as philosophically as was possible under the circumstances. And then he tried a little conversation by way of proving his perfect composure and command of his feelings, during which poor Alice sat fluttered and uncomfortable and self-conscious as she had never been before. Her work was at an end for that night at least. She held Colin's little poem in her hand, and kept her eyes upon it, and tried with all her might to invent something gracious and complimentary which could be said without offence; for, of course, carefully as he imagined himself to have concealed it, and utterly unconscious of the fact as Lauderdale remained, who was watching them, Alice was as entirely aware of the state of Colin's mind and temper at the moment as he was himself. After a while, he got up and went to Meredith's table by the fire; and the two began to talk, as Alice imagined, of matters much too serious and momentous to leave either at leisure to remark her movements. When she saw them thus occupied, she left the room almost stealthily, carrying with her the tall lamp with its four tongues of flame. She set down her light in her own room, when she reached that sanctuary, and once more read and pored over Colin's poem. There was nothing about love in it, and consequently nothing improper or alarming to Alice. It was all about the Pantheon and its vespers, and the echoes in the dome. But then why did he give it to her?—why did he look so much disturbed when she in her surprise and unreadiness hesitated over it? Such an offering was totally new to Alice; but how could she be expected to understand exactly how it ought to be received? But it is impossible to describe how vexed and mortified she was to find she had failed of what was expected of her, and inflicted pain when she might have given pleasure. She had been rude, and to be rude was criminal in her code of manners; and a flutter of other questions, other curiosities, awoke without any will of her own in the young creature's maiden bosom; for, indeed, she was still very young,—not nineteen,—and so preoccupied by one class of thoughts that her mind had been absolutely barred against all others until now. The end was that she put Colin's poem, not in her bosom—which, indeed, is an inconvenient receptacle, and one not often chosen nowadays even by young ladies,—but into the private pocket of her writing-case, the very innermost of her sanctuaries. "How clever he is!" Alice thought to herself; "how odd that such things should come into any one's head! and to think I had not even the civility to say that it was beautiful poetry!" Then she went back very humbly into the sitting-room, and served Colin with the last cup of tea, which was the most excellent. "For I know you like strong tea, Mr. Campbell," she said, looking at him with appealing eyes. "It feels quite strange to think that we should know you so well,—you who can write such beautiful poetry," * she managed

* Miss Matty had been so good an audience that Colin at this time of his life was a little spoiled in respect to his poetry, which, however, after all, he did not consider poetry, but only verses, to amuse himself with. The little poem in question, which he had entitled "Vespers in the Pantheon," is, for the satisfaction of his friends, given underneath:—

"What voice is in the mighty dome,
Where the blue eye of heaven looks through,
And where the rain falls, and the dew,
In the old heart of Rome?

"On the vast area below
Are priests in robes of sullied white,
And humble servitors that light
The altars with a glow—

"Pale tapers in the twilight dim,
Poor humble folks that come to say
Their farewell to departing day,
Their darkling faith in *Him*.

"Who rules imperial Rome the last:
The song is shrill and sad below,
With discords harsh of want and woe
Into the music cast.

"But in the mighty vault that bares
Its open heart into the sky
Vague peals of anthem sounding high
Echo the human prayers.

"Oh, solemn shrine! wherein lie dead
The gods of old, the dreams of men,
What voice is this that wakes again
The echoes overhead,

"Pealing aloft the holiest name—
The lowliest name, Rome's ancient scorn—
Now to earth's furthest boundaries borne,
With fame above all fame?

"Is it some soul whose mortal days
Had known no better God than Jove,

to say later in the evening. "I have always supposed a poet so different."

"With wings, perhaps?" said Colin, who was not displeased even with this simple testimony.

"Oh, no," said Alice, "that is impossible, you know,—but certainly very different; and it was so very kind to think of giving it to me."

Thus she made her peace with the young man; but it is doubtful how far she promoted her own by so doing. It introduced a new element of wonder and curiosity, if nothing more, into her watching life.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"It would be a great satisfaction to me," said Lauderdale, "to have some understanding about their relations. There's few folk so lonely in this world but what they have some kin, be they kind or not. It's awfu' to look at that poor bit thing, and think how forlorn she'll be by and by when"—

"When?" said Colin,—"what do you mean? Meredith is not worse, that I can see. Is *that* what you are thinking of?"

"It's an awfu' gradual descent," said Lauderdale; "nae precipices there, and pitiful to behold; but he's making progress on his way. I'm no mistaken, callant; a man like me has seen such sights before. It looks as if it could go on forever, and nae great difference perceptible from day to day, but the wheels a-turning and the thread spinning off, and nobody can say for certain what moment it may break, like glass, and the spinning come to an end. Ay, it's an awfu' mystery. You may break your heart thinking; but you'll come to no solution. I've tried it as much as most men, and should ken;—but that's no the matter under consideration. I would be glad to know something about their friends."

"I don't suppose they have any friends," said Colin, who had by this time forgotten the suggestion of his English acquaintances. "He would never have brought his sister here with him alone if he had had any one to leave her with,—that is, if he believed, as he says he does, that he was going to die,—which words," said the young man, with a pang of fellow-feeling and natural pity, "are terrible words to say."

"I'm no so sure about either of your propositions," said Lauderdale; "I've very little objection to die, for my part. No to speak of hopes a man has as a Christian,—though I maybe canna see them as clear as that poor callant thinks he does,—it would be an awfu' satisfaction to ken what was the meaning of it all, which is my grand difficulty in this life. And I cannot say I am satisfied, for that matter, that he brought his sister here for want of somebody to leave her with; she's a kind of property that he wouldna like to leave behind. He was not thinking of *her* when they started, but of himsel'; nor can I see that his mind's awakening to any thought of her even now, though he's awfu' anxious, no doubt, about her soul and yours and mine. Whisht! it's temperament, callant. I'm no blaming the poor dying lad. It's hard upon a man if he cannot be permitted to take some bit female creature that belongs to him as far as the grave's mouth. She maun find her way back from there the best way she can. It's human nature, Colin, for a' you look like a glaring lion at me."

"I prefer your ordinary manner of expounding human nature," said Colin. "Don't talk like this; if Miss Meredith is left so really helpless and solitary, at all events, Lauderdale, she can rely on you and me."

Though dimly prescient of a love,
Was worthy higher praise?—

"Some soul that late hath seen the Lord:
Some wistful soul, eager to share
The tender trust of Christian prayer,
Though not by wish or word:—

"By homage inarticulate:
Murmurs and thunders of sweet sound:
And great Amens that circle round
Heaven's liberal open gate?

"Great singer, wert thou one of those
Spirits in prison whom He sought,
Soon as his wondrous work was wrought,
Ending all doubts and woes?

"Alone? or comes there here a throng?
Agrippa—he who built the shrine:
And men who groped for the divine
Through lifetimes hard and long.

"Great Romans! to this vault austere
'Tis meet we should return to tell
Of that which was inscrutable,
That God hath made it clear.

"So we, still bound in mortal pain,
Take courage 'neath the echoing dome,
In the dear heart of this sad Rome,
To give you back—Amen!"

"Ay," said the philosopher, shortly; "and grand protectors we would be for the like of her. Two men no her equals in the eye of the world,—I'm no heeding your indignant looks, my freend; I'm a better judge than you of some things,—and one of us no of an age to be over and above trusted. A lad like you can take care of a bit thing like her only in one way; and that's out of the question under present circumstances,—even if either of you were thinking of such vanities, of which I see no sign."

"None whatever," said Colin, with a momentary heat. "She is not in my way; and, besides, she is greatly too much occupied to think of any such vanities, as you say."

"Hallo," said Lauderdale to himself; and he cast a half-amused, suspicious look at his companion, whose face was flushed a little. Colin was thinking only of Alice's want of comprehension and sympathy on the previous night; but the touch of offence and mortification was as evident as if she had been unkind to him in more important particulars.

"Being agreed on that point, it's easier to manage the rest," Lauderdale resumed, with the ghost of a smile; "and I dinna pretend, for my own part, to be a fit guardian for a young leddy. It's a' very well for Tellemachus to wander about the world like this but I'm no qualified to keep watch and ward over the princess. Poor thing!" said the philosopher, "it's awfu' early to begin her troubles; but I would be easy in my mind, comparatively, if we could find out about their friends. She's no so very communicative in that particular; and she has her bit woman's wiles, innocent as she looks. She'll give me no satisfaction, though I'm awfu' cunning in my questions. What was it yon silly woman said about some Meredith of some place? I'm no without suspicions in my own mind."

"What sort of suspicions?" said Colin. "She said Meredith of Malthy. I wrote it down somewhere. There was a row about him in the papers—don't you remember—a few years ago."

"Oh, ay, I remember," said Lauderdale; "one of those that consume widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers. The wonder to me is how this callant, if he should happen to be such a man's son, did not take a sickening at religion altogether. That's the consequence in a common mind. It gives me a higher notion of this poor lad. He has his faults, like most folk I ken," said Lauderdale. "He's awfu' young, which is the chief of all, and it's one that will never mend in his case in this life; but, if he's yon man's son, no to have abandoned a' religion, no to have scorned the very name of preaching and prayer, is a clear token to me that the root of the matter's in him; though he may be a wee unrighteous to his ain flesh and blood,"—the philosopher went on philosophically,—"that's neither here nor there."

"If religion does not make us righteous to our own flesh and blood, what is the good of it?" said Colin. "To care for souls, as you say, but not to care for leaving his sister so helpless and desolate, would be to me as bad as his father's wickedness. Bah! his father!—what am I saying? He is no more his father than the duke is mine. It is only a coincidence of name."

"I'm making no assertions," said Lauderdale. "It may be or it may not be; I'm no saying; but you should aye bear in mind that there's an awfu' difference between practice and theory. To have a good theory—or, if ye like, a grand ideal—o' existence, is about as much as a man can attain to in this world. To put it into full practice is reserved, let us aye hope, for the life to come. However, I wouldna say," said Colin's guardian, changing his tone, "but that kind of practical paradox might run in the blood. Our friend Arthur—poor man!—has no meaning of neglect to his sister. Do no man injustice. Maybe the other had as little intention of cheating them that turned out his victims. An awfu' practical accident like that might be accompanied by a beautiful theory. Just as in the case of his son"—

"Stuff!" said Colin, who thought his friend prosy. "Why will you insist on saying 'his son'? Meredith is not an uncommon name. You might as well say Owen Meredith was his brother."

"There's nothing more likely," said the philosopher, composedly; "brothers aye take different roads, especially when they come out of such a nest."

"Don't talk nonsense," said Colin; "the nest is entirely problematical, and your reasoning is,—Scotch, Scotch to the heart, deductive, and altogether independent of fact. You might as well say, because this is an Italian landscape we are looking at, because

these gray trees are olives, and that plain the Campagna, that it cannot be Prince Charlie who lies down yonder under shelter of that shabby dome. What a sermon it is! I wish I could preach like that when I come to my pulpit; but the burden, I fear, would be,—'What does it matter? what is the good of laboring and fighting and conquering, winning battles or losing them; Great Hadrian is all dissolved into patches and tatters yonder, and here is Charles Stuart in a stranger's grave.' On the whole, it is the man who has failed who has the best of it now. It is odd to think of the perseverance of the race, and how any man ever attempts to do anything. Let us lie down here and dream till we die."

"It's awfu' to be a poet," said Lauderdale; "the poor callant contemplates more verses. That kind of thing is well enough for bits of laddies at Oxford and Cambridge; but we've no Newdigates in our university. Dinna you fash your head about the race. I'm no a man that believes in sermons myself, whether they be from your lips, or from the Campagna. Every man has his own affairs in hand. He'll pay only a very limited attention either to it or to you; but listen now to what I have got to say."

What Lauderdale had to say was still upon the subject of which Colin by this time had got tired,—the supposed connection of the brother and sister with the famous, or rather notorious, Meredith of Maltby, who was one of the great leaders of that fashion of swindling so prevalent a few years ago, by means of which directors of banks and joint-stock companies brought so many people to ruin. Of these practitioners Mr. Meredith of Maltby had been one of the most successful. He had passed through one or two disagreeable examinations, it is true, in Insolvent Courts and elsewhere; but he had managed to steer clear of the law, and to retain a comfortable portion of his ill-gotten gains. He was a pious man, who subscribed to all the societies, and had, of course, since these unpleasant accidents occurred, been held up to public admiration by half the newspapers of Great Britain as an instance of the natural effect produced upon the human mind by an assumption of superior piety; and more than one clever leading article, intended to prove that lavish subscriptions to benevolent purposes, and attendance at prayer-meetings, were the natural evidences of a mind disposed to prey on its fellow-creatures, had been made pointed and emphatic by his name. Lauderdale's "case" was subtile enough, and showed that he, at least, had not forgotten the hint given in the Pantheon. He told Colin that all his cunning inquiries could elicit no information about the father of the forlorn pair. Their mother was dead, and, as far as she was concerned, Alice was sufficiently communicative; and she had an aunt in India whom Lauderdale knew by heart. "A' that is so easy to draw out that the other is all the more remarkable," said the inquisitor; "and it's awfu' instructive to see the way she doubles out when I think I've got her in a corner,—no saying what's no true, but fencing like a little Jesuit,—that is, speaking proverbially, and so vouching for my premises, for I ken nothing about Jesuits in my ain person. I would like to be at the bottom of a woman's notions on such subjects. The way that bit thing will lift up her innocent face, and give me to understand a lee without saying it"—

"Be civil," interrupted Colin; "a lie is strong language, especially as you have no right whatever to question her so closely."

"I said nothing about lies," said Lauderdale; "I say she gives me to understand a *lee* without saying a word that's no true, which is not only an awfu' civil form of expression on my part, but a gift of womanhood that, so far as I ken, is just unparalleled. If it werena instinct, it would be genius. She went so far once as to say, in her bit fine way, that they were not quite happy in a' their connections: 'There are some of our friends that Arthur can't approve of,' said she, which was enough to make a man laugh, or cry, whichever he might be disposed to. A bonnie judge Authur is, to be believed in like that. But the end of the whole matter is that I'm convinced the hot-headed callant has carried her off from her home without anybody's knowledge, and that it's an angry father you and me will have to answer to when we are left her protectors, as you say."

"I hope I am not afraid to meet anybody when I have justice on my side," said Colin, loftily. "She is nothing more to me than any other helpless woman; but I will do my best to take care of her against any man whatsoever, if she is trusted to me."

Lauderdale laughed with mingled exasperation and amusement. "Bravo," he said; "the like of that's grand talking; but I'll have no hand for my part, in aiding and abetting domestic treason. I'm far from easy in my mind on the subject altogether. It's ill to vex a dying man, but it is worse to let a spirit go out of the world with guilt on its head: I'm in an awfu' difficulty whether to speak to him or no. If you would but come down off your high horse and give me a little assistance. It's a braw business, take it all together. A young woman, both bonnie and good, but abject to what her brother bids her even now when he's living, and us two single men, with nae justification for meddling, and an indignant father, no doubt, to make an account to. It's no a position I admire for my part."

"It was I that drew you into it," said Colin, with some resentment. "After all, they were my friends to begin with. Don't let me bring you into a responsibility which is properly mine."

"Ay, ay," said Lauderdale, calmly, "that's aye the way with you callants. If a man sees a difficulty in anything concerning you, off you fling, and will have no more to do with him. I'm no one to be dismissed in that fashion,—no to say that it would be more becoming to consider the difficulty, like reasonable creatures, and make up our minds how it is to be met."

"I beg your pardon," said Colin, repentant; "only, to be sure, the imprudence, if there was any imprudence, was mine. But it is hard to be talking in this manner, as if all were over, while Meredith lives, poor fellow. Such invalids live forever sometimes. There he is, for a miracle, riding! When summer comes, he may be all right."

"Ay," said Lauderdale, "I make no doubt of that; but no in your way. He'll be better off when summer comes." Meredith turned a corner close upon them as he spoke. He was riding, it is true, but only on a mule, jogging along at a funeral pace, with Alice walking by his side. He smiled when he met them; but the smile was accompanied by a momentary flush, as of shame or pain.

"The last step but one," he said. "I have given up walking forever. I did not think I should ever have come to this; but my spirit is proud, and needs to be mortified. Campbell, come here. It is long since we have had any conversation. I thought God was dealing with your soul when I last talked to you. Tell me, if you were as far gone as I am,—if you were reduced to *this*,"—and the sick man laid his thin white hand upon the neck of the animal he was riding,—"what consolation would you have to keep you from sinking? It may come sooner than you think."

"It is not easy to imagine how one would conduct one's self under such circumstances," said Colin; "let us talk of something else. If it were coming,—and it may be, for anything I can tell,—I think I should prefer not to give it too much importance. Look at that low blaze of sunshine, how it catches St. Peter's. These sunsets are like dramas; but nobody plans the grouping beforehand," said the young man, with an involuntary allusion which he was sorry for the next moment, but could not recall.

"That is an unkind speech," said Meredith; "but I forgive you. If I could plan the grouping, as you say, I should like to collect all the world to see me die. Heathens, Papists, Mahometans, Christians of every description,—I would call them to see with what confidence a Christian could traverse the dark valley knowing Him who can sustain, and who has preceded him there."

"Yes, that was Addison's idea; but his was an age when people did things for effect," said Colin: "and everything I have heard makes me believe that people generally die very composedly upon the whole. We who have all possible assurances and consolations are not superior in that respect to the ignorant and stupid,—scarcely even to the wicked. Either people have an infinite confidence in themselves and their good fortune, or else absolute faith in God is a great deal more general than you think it. I should like to believe that last was the case. Pardon me for what I said. You who realize so strongly what you are going to should certainly die, when that time comes, a glorious and joyful death."

At these words a cloud passed over the eager, hectic countenance which Meredith had turned to his friend. "Ah, you don't know," he said, with a sudden depression which Colin had never seen in him before. "Sometimes God sees fit to abandon his servants even in that hour; what, if after preaching to others I should myself be a castaway?" This conversation was going on while Alice talked to

Lauderdale of the housekeeping, and how the man at the Trattoria had charged a scudo too much in the last weekly bill.

"Meredith," said Colin, laying his hand on his friend's arm, and forgetting all the discussion with Lauderdale which had occupied the afternoon, "when you say such words as Father and Saviour, you put some meaning in them; do you not? You don't think it depends upon how you feel to-day or to-morrow whether God will stand by his children or not? I don't believe in the cast-away as you understand it."

"Ah, my dear friend, I am afraid you don't believe in any castaways; don't fall into that deadly error and snare of the devil," said the sick man.

"We must not discuss mysteries," said Colin. "There are men for whom no punishment is bad enough, and whom no amount of mercy seems to benefit. I don't know what is to become of them. For my own part, I prefer not to inquire. But this I *know*, that my father, much less my mother, would not altogether abandon their son for any crime; and does not God love us better than our fathers and our mothers?" said Colin, with a moisture gathering in his brown eyes and brightening his smile. As for Meredith, he snatched his hand away, and pushed forward with a feverish impulse. A sound, half sigh, half groan, burst from him, and Colin could see that this inarticulate complaint had private references of which he knew nothing. Then Lauderdale's suggestion returned to his mind with singular force; but it was not a time to make any inquiries, even if such had been possible. Instinctively, without knowing it, Meredith turned from that subject to the only other which could mutually interest men so unlike each other: and what he said betrayed distinctly enough what had been the tenor of his thoughts.

"*She* has no mother," said Meredith, with a little wave of his hand towards his sister. "Poor Alice! But I have no doubt God has gracious purposes towards her," he continued, recovering himself. "*This* is in the family, and I don't doubt she will follow me soon."

It was thus he disposed of the matter which for the strangers, to whose care he was about to leave her, was a matter of so much anxious thought.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

After this Meredith's malady made gradual but rapid progress. When Colin and his friend returned from Rome in the evening, after their expeditions there, they imagined themselves to be conscious of a difference in his looks even from the morning. He ceased to move about; he ceased to go out; finally, he ceased to get up from his bed. All these changes were accomplished very gradually, with a heartbreaking regularity of succession. Alice, who was constantly engaged about him, doing every kind of office for him, was fortunately too much occupied to take full recognizance of that remorseless progress of decay; but the two friends who watched it with eyes less urgent than those of love, yet almost more painfully pitiful, could trace all the little advances of the malady. Then there came the time, the last stage of all, when it was necessary to sit up with him all night,—an office which Colin and Lauderdale shared between them, to let the poor little sister have a little reluctant rest. The season had warmed into May, of all seasons the sweetest in Italy. To see the sun shine, it seemed impossible to think that it would not shine forever; and when the window of the sick-room was opened in the early morning, such a breath of life and happiness came in—such a sweet gust of air, wild from the great breadth of the Campagna, breathing of dews and blossoms—as felt to Colin's lips like an elixir of life. But that breathing balm imparted no refreshment to the dying man. He was not suffering much; he was only weary to the bottom of his soul,—languid and yet restless, eager to be moved, yet unable to bear any motion. While little Alice withdrew behind them for a chance moment to shed the tears that kept always gathering, and say a prayer in her heart for her dying brother,—a prayer in which, with a child's simplicity, she still left room for his restoration, and called it possible,—the two others watched with the profoundest interest that which was not only the dying of a friend, but the waning of a life. To see him so individual and characteristic, with all the notable features and even faults of his mind as distinct and apparent as if he had been in the strongest health, and yet so near the end, was the strangest spectacle. What was it the end of? He directed them all from his death-bed, and,

indeed, controlled them all with a will stronger than ever before, securing his own way in face of all their remonstrances, and, indeed, seemed to grow more and more strong, absolute, and important, as he approached the final stage of weakness, which is a sight always wonderful to see. He kept on writing his book, propped up upon pillows, as long as he had strength enough to hold the pen; but when that power, too, failed him, the unyielding soul coerced itself into accepting the pen of another, and dictated the last chapter, at which Alice labored during the day, and which occasionally, to beguile the tedium of the long night-watches, his other attendants were permitted to carry on. The nights grew shorter and shorter as the season advanced, and sometimes it was by the lovely light of the dawning morning, instead of the glimmer of the lamp, that these scattered sentences were written. At other moments, when the patient could not sleep, but was content to rest, wonderful scraps of conversation went on in that chamber of death. Meredith lay gaunt and wasted among his pillows,—his great eyes filling the room, as the spectators sometimes thought; and by his bedside sometimes the gigantic figure of Lauderdale, dimly visible by means of the faint night-light,—sometimes Colin's young softened face and air of tender compassion. It did not occur to any of the three to ask by what right they came together in relations so near and sacred. The sick man's brothers, had he possessed them, could not have watched him with more care, or with less doubt about his right to all their ministrations; but they talked with him as perhaps no brother could have talked,—recognizing the reality of his position, and even discussing it as a matter in which they, too, had the profoundest interest. The room was bare enough, and contained little comfort to English eyes,—uncarpeted, with bare tiles underneath the feet, and scantily furnished with an old sofa, a chair or two, and a table. There were two windows, which looked out upon that Campagna which the dying man was to see no more, nor cared to see. But that great living picture, of no benefit to him, was the only one there; for poor Meredith had himself caused to be taken down from the wall a print of the Madonna, and the little cross with its basin for holy water underneath, which had hung at the head of his bed. He had even sent away a picture of the Crucifixion,—a bad, yet not unimpressive copy. "I want no outward symbols," said the sick man; "there will be none where I am going," and this was the beginning of one of those strange talks by night.

"It's awfu' difficult to ken," said Lauderdale. "For my part it's a great wonder to me that there has never been any revelation worthy of credit out of that darkness. That poor fellow Dives, in the parable, is the only man I mind of that takes a Christian view of the subject. He would have sent one to tell. The miracle is, that nae man was ever permitted to come."

"Don't say so," said Meredith. "Oh, my dear friend! if you could but know the joy it would give me to bring you to Christ before I die,—to see you accept and receive him. Has not he come to seek and to save?"

"Callant," said the watcher, with a long-drawn breath, "I've longer acquaintance with him than you can have; and if I didna believe in him, I would hang myself, and get to an explanation of all things. If it was not for him, wherefore should I, that have nobody dependent on me, endure the mystery? But that's no answer to my question. He came to put a meaning to the world that has little enough signification without him, but no to answer a' questions that a human spirit can put to heaven and earth. I've heard of bargains made between them that were to die and them that had to live."

"You put it in a strange way, Lauderdale," said the dying man; "most people would say, those who had to die. But what can any one want beyond what is revealed,—Jerusalem the golden? How strange it is to think that a worm like me shall so soon be treading those shining streets, while you,—you whom the world thinks so much better off"—

"Whisht," said Lauderdale, with a husky voice. "Do you no think it would be an awfu' satisfaction to us that stay behind if we could have but a glint of the shining streets you speak of? Many a long day we'll strain our eyes and try hard to see you there; but a' to little purpose. I'm no saying I would not take it on trust for myself, and be content with what God pleased; but it's hard to part with them that belong to us, and ken nothing about them,—where they are, or how they are."

"They are in heaven! If they were children of God, they are with him," said the sick man, anxiously. "Lauderdale, I cannot bear to think that you do not believe,—that perhaps I may not meet you there."

"Maybe no," said the philosopher; "there's the awfu' question. A man might go ranging about the shining streets (as you say) forever, and never find them that belonged to him; or, if there's no geographical limits, there may be others harder to pass. It's awfu' little comfort I can get for my own mind out of shining streets. How am I to picture you to myself, callant, when I take thoughts of you? I have the fancy in my mind to give you messages to friends I have away yonder; but how can I tell if you'll ever see them? It's no a question of believing or not believing. I put little faith in Milton, and none in the good books, from which two sources we draw a great part of our talk about heaven. It's no even to ken if they're happy or no happy that troubles me. I've nae hesitation to speak of in leaving *that* in God's hand. It's but to have an inkling ever so slight where ye are, and how you are," said Lauderdale, unconsciously changing his pronouns, "and that ye keep thought of us that spend so many thoughts on you."

After this there was a little pause, which fell into the perfect stillness of the night outside, and held the little dim-lighted chamber in the midst of all the darkness, like the picture of a shadowy "interior," with two motionless figures, the living and the dying, painted upon the great gloom of night. Meredith, who, notwithstanding the superior intensity of his own thoughts, had been moved by Lauderdale's,—and who, used as he was to think himself dying, yet perhaps heard himself thus unconsciously reckoned among the dead with a momentary thrill,—was the first to speak.

"In all this I find you too vague," said the patient. "You speak about heaven as if you were uncertain only of its aspect; you have no anxiety about the way to get there. My friend, you are very good to me,—you are excellent, so far as this world goes; I know you are. But, oh, Lauderdale, think! Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Before you speculate about heaven, ask yourself are you sure to get there!"

"Ay," said Lauderdale, vaguely, "it's maybe a wee like the question of the Sadducees,—I'm no saying; and it's awfu', the dead blank of wisdom and knowledge that's put forth for a response,—no any information to you; nothing but a quenching of your flippant questions and impident pretensions. No marrying nor giving in marriage there, and the curious fools baffled, but nae light thrown upon the darkness! I'll have to wait like other folk for my answer; but, if it's according to your new nature and faculties,—which surely it must be,—you'll not forget to give us a thought at times. If you feel a wee lonely at the first,—I'm no profane, callant; you're but a man when a's done, or rather a laddie, and you'll surely miss your friends,—dinna forget how long and how often we'll think of you."

"Shall you?" said the dying man. "I have given you nothing but trouble ever since I knew you, and it is more than I deserve. But there is One who is worthy of all your thoughts. When you think of me, oh, love him, my dear friend, and so there will be a bond between us still."

"Ay," said Lauderdale once more. It was a word he used when his voice could not be trusted, and his heart was full. "Ay," he repeated, after a long pause, "I'll no neglect that grand bond. It's a bargain between you and me no to be broken. If ye were free for such an act, it would be awfu' friendly to bring me word how things are," he continued, in a low tone, "though it's folly to ask; for if it had been possible it would have been done before now."

"It is God who must teach and not me," said the dying man. "He has other instruments,—and you must seek him for yourself, and let him reveal his will to you. If you are faithful to God's service, he will relieve you of your doubts," said Arthur, who did not understand his friend's mind, but even at that solemn moment looked at him with a perplexed mixture of disapproval and compassion. And thus the silence fell again like a curtain over the room, and once more it became a picture faintly painted on the darkness, faintly relieved and lighted up by touches of growing light, till at length the morning came in full and fair, finding out, as with a sudden surprise, the ghostly face on the pillow, with its great eyes closed in disturbed sleep, and by the bedside another face scarcely less motionless,—the face of the man

who was no unbeliever, but whose heart longed to know and see what others were content in vague generalities to tell of, and say they believed.

This was one of the conversations held in the dead of night in Meredith's room. Next evening it was Colin, reluctantly permitted by his faithful guardian to share this labor, who took the watcher's place; and then the two young men, who were so near of an age, but whose prospects were so strongly different, talked to each other after a different fashion. Both on the brink of the world, and with incalculable futures before them, it was natural they should discuss the objects and purposes of life, upon which Meredith, who thought himself matured by death, had, as he imagined, so much advantage over his friend, who was not going to die.

"I remember once thinking as you do," said the dying man. "The world looked so beautiful! No man ever loved its vanities and its pomp more than I. I shudder sometimes to think what would become of me if God had left me to myself; but he was more merciful. I see things in their true light now."

"You will have a great advantage over me," said Colin, trying to smile; "for you will always know the nature of my occupations, while yours will be a mystery to me. But we can be friends all the same. As for me, I shall not have many pomps and vanities to distract me,—a poor man's son; and a Scotch minister does not fall in the way of such temptations."

"There are temptations to worldliness in every sphere," said Meredith. "You once spoke eagerly about going to Oxford and taking honors. My dear friend, trust a dying man. There are no honors worth thinking of but the crown and the palm, which Christ bestows on them that love him."

"Yes," said Colin; "but we are not all chosen for these. If I have to live, I must qualify myself the best I can for my work. I should like to be of a little use to Scotland, if that were possible. When I hear the poor people here singing their vespers"—

"Ah, Campbell! one word—let me speak," said his friend. "Alice showed me the poem you had given her. You don't mean it, I know; but let me beg you not to utter such sentiments. You seem to consent to the doctrine of purgatory, one of the worst delusions of the Church of Rome. There are no spirits in prison, my dear, dear friend. When I leave you, I shall be with my Saviour. Don't give your countenance to such inventions of the devil."

"That was not what I intended to say," said Colin, who had no heart for argument. "I meant that to see the habit of devotion of all these people, whom we call so ignorant, and to remember how little we have of that among our own people, whom we consider enlightened, goes to my heart. I should like to do a priest's duty."

"Again!" said Meredith "Dear Campbell, you will be a minister; there is but one great High Priest."

"Yes," said Colin, "most true, and the greatest of all consolations. But yet I believe in priests inferior,—priests who need be nothing more than men. I am not so much for teaching as you are, you know; I have so little to teach any man. With you who are going to the Fount of all knowledge it will be different. I can conceive, I can imagine, how magnificent may be *your* work," the young man said, with his voice faltering, as he laid his warm young hand upon the fingers which were almost dead.

Meredith closed his hand upon that of his friend, and looked at him with his eyes so clear and awful, enlarged and lighted up with the prescience of what was to come. "If you do your work faithfully, it will be the same work," he said. "Our Master alone knows the particulars. If I might have perhaps to supplement and complete what you do on earth!—Ah, but I must not be tempted into vain speculations! Enough that I shall know his will and see him as he is. I desire no more."

"Amen," said Colin; "and when you are in your new career, think of me sometimes, worried and vexed as I know I shall be. We shall not be able to communicate then; but I know now beforehand what I shall have to go through. You don't know Scotland, Meredith. A man who tries any new reformation in the church will have to fight for trifles of detail which are not worth fighting for, and perhaps get both himself and his work degraded in consequence. You will know no such cares. Think of me sometimes when you are doing your work 'with

thunders of acclaim.' I wonder—but you would think it a profanity if I said what I was going to say."

"What was it?" said Meredith, who, indeed, would not have been sorry had his friend uttered a profanity which might give him occasion to speak, for perhaps the last time, "faithfully" to his soul.

"I wonder," said Colin, whose voice was low, "whether our Master, who sees us both, though we cannot see each other, might tell you sometimes what your friend was doing. He, too, is a man. I mean no irreverence, Meredith. There were men for whom, above his tenderness for all, he had a special love. I should like to think it. I can know nothing of you; but then I am less likely to forget you, staying behind in this familiar world."

And the two youths again clasped hands, tears filling the eyes of the living one, but no moisture in the clear orbs of him who was about to die.

"Let us be content to leave it all in his hands," said Meredith. "God bless you, Colin, for your love; but think nothing of me,—think of him who is our first and greatest Friend."

And then again came silence and sleep, and the night throbbed silently round the lighted chamber and the human creatures full of thought, and again took place the perennial transformation, the gradual rising of the morning light, the noiseless entrance of the day, finding out, with surprised and awful looks, the face of the dying. This is how the last nights were spent. Down below in the convent there was a good friar, who watched the light in the window, and pondered much in his mind whether he should not go thither with his crucifix, and save the poor young heretic in spite of himself; but the Frate was well aware that the English resented such interruptions, and did better for Arthur; for he carried the thought of him through all his devotions, and muttered under his breath the absolution, with his eyes fixed upon the lighted window, and prayed, if he had any credit in heaven through the compassionate saints, the Blessed Virgin, and by the aid of Him whose image he held up towards the unseen sufferer, that the sins which God's servant had thus remitted on earth might be, even without the knowledge of the penitent, remitted in heaven. Thus Colin's belief in priests was justified without his knowing it; and perhaps God judged the intercession of Father Francisco more tenderly than poor Arthur would have done. And with these private proceedings, which the world was unaware of, night after night passed on until the night came which was to have no day.

They had all assembled in the room, in which it seemed before morning so great an event was to happen,—all worn and tired out with watching; the evidences of which appeared upon Colin and Alice, though Lauderdale, more used to exertion, wore his usual aspect. As usual, Meredith lay very solemnly in a kind of pathetic youthful state in his bed,—struggling for every breath, yet never forgetting that he lay there before heaven and earth, a monument, as he said, of God's grace, and an example of how a Christian could die. He called Alice, and the others would have withdrawn; but this he would not permit. "We have no secrets to discuss," he said. "I am not able to say much now. Let my last words be for Christ. Alice, you are the last. We have all died of it. It is not very hard; but you cannot die in peace, as I do, unless you give yourself to Christ. These are my last words to my sister. You may not live long; you have not a moment to spare. Give yourself to Christ, my little Alice, and then your death-bed will be as peaceful as mine."

"Yes," said the docile sister, through her sobs, "I will never, never forget what you have said to me. Oh, Arthur, you are going to them all!"

"I am going to God," said the dying man; "I am going to my Lord and Saviour; that is all I desire to think of now."

And there was a momentary breathless pause. She had his hand in both of hers, and was crying with an utter despair and abandonment to which she had never given herself up before. "Oh, Arthur,—papa!" the poor girl said, under her breath. If they had been less interested, or if the stillness had been a degree less intense, the voice was so low that the two other watchers could not have heard her. But the answer was spoken aloud.

"Tell him I forgive him, Alice. I can say so now. Tell him to repent while there is time. If you wish it, you can tell Colin and Lauderdale; they have been brothers to

us. Come here, all of you," said Meredith. "Hear my last words. Nothing is of any importance but the love of Christ. I have tried everything in the world,—its pleasures and its ambitions—and— But everything except Christ is vanity. Come to him while it is called to-day. And now come and kiss me, Alice; for I am going to die."

"Oh, no, Arthur. Oh, Arthur, do not leave me yet!" cried the poor girl. Lauderdale drew her gently away, and signed to Colin to take the place by the bed. He drew her hand through his arm and led her softly into the great empty *salone*, where there was no light except that of the moon, which came in in broad white bars at the side windows. "Whist! it'll no be yet," said the kind guardian who had taken possession of Alice. No mother or lover could have been tenderer with the little forlorn creature in this hour which was the most terrible of all. He made her walk softly about with him, beguiling her awful suspense a little with that movement. "A little more strength, for his sake," said Lauderdale; "another trial —and then nobody shall stop your tears. It's for his sake; the last thing you can do for him."

And then the poor little sister gave utterance to a bitter cry. "If he would say something kind for papa, I would not care," she said, smothering her painful sobs; and Lauderdale drew her closer on his arm, supporting and soothing her, and led her about, slowly and noiselessly, in the great empty room, lighted with those broad bars of moonlight, waiting till she had regained a little composure to return to the chamber of death.

Meredith lay silent for some time, with his great eyes gazing into the vacancy before him, and the last thrill of fever in his frame. He thought he was thus coming with all his faculties alert and vivid to a direct conscious encounter with the unknown might of death. "Get the book, Colin," he said, with a voice which yet possessed a certain nervous strength; "it is now the time to write the conclusion;" and he dictated with a steady voice the date of his last postscript: "Frascati, Midnight, May 16th.—The last hour of my life"—

PART XII.—CHAPTER XXXV.

MEREDITH died the next day, after a struggle longer and harder than could have been anticipated, and very differently from the manner in which, when he dictated his last message to the world, he expected to die. Few human creatures are strong enough, except in books, to march thus solemnly and statelily to the edge of the grave. The last event itself was twenty-four hours later than the anxious watchers expected it to be, and wore them all out more utterly than any previous part of their patient's lingering illness. He dictated his postscript, lying in great exhaustion, but solemn, calm, not without a certain pomp of conscious grandeur, victorious over death and the grave. "That great angel whom men call the last enemy is standing by my bedside," the dying man said, giving forth his last utterance slowly word by word. "In an hour I shall be clay and ashes. I send you, friends, this last message. Death is not terrible to those who love Christ. I feel a strength in me that is not my own. I had fears and doubts, but I have them no longer. The gates of heaven are opening. I close my eyes, for I can no longer see the lights of this world; when I open them again, it will be to behold the face of my Lord. Amen. This I say to all the world with my last breath. For those who love Christ it is not hard to die."

Colin, who wrote the words, trembled over them with a weakness like a woman's; but Meredith's broken and interrupted voice was shaken only by the last pangs of mortality, not by any faltering of the spirit. "I tell you, Colin, it is not hard," he said, and smiled upon his friend, and composed himself to meet the last encounter; but such was not the end. The long night lingered on, and the dying man dozed a little, and woke again less dignified and composed. Then came the weary morning, with its dreadful daylight, which made the heart sick, and then a long day of dying, terrible to behold, perhaps not so hard to bear. The two who were his brothers at this dreadful moment exercised all their power to keep Alice out of the room where this struggle was going on; but the gentle little girl was a faithful woman, and kept her place. He had had his moment of conscious victory, but now in its turn the human soul was vanquished. He became unconscious of their consoling presence, conscious of nothing but the awful restlessness, the intolerable languor and yet more intolerable nervous strength which kept him alive in spite of himself; and then the veiled and abstracted spirit awoke to matters of which, when in full possession of his faculties, Arthur had made no mention. He began to murmur strange words as he lay tossing in that last struggle. "Tell my father," he said once or twice, but never finished the message. That death so clear and conscious, for which he had hoped, was not granted to him; and, when at last the deliverance came, even Alice, on her knees by the bedside, felt in her desolation a moment's relief. It was almost dawn of the second morning when they raised her up and led her tenderly away to Sora Antonia, the kind Italian woman, who waited outside. Colin was scarcely less overwhelmed than she. The young man sank down by the table where, on the previous night he had been Arthur's secretary, and almost fainting dropped his head upon the book which still lay open there. Twenty-four hours only of additional hard labor added on to the ending life; but it looked as many years to the young, inexperienced spirit which had thus, for the first time, followed another, so far as a spectator can, through the valley of the shadow of death. Lauderdale, who knew better, and upon whose greater strength this dreadful strain of watching had made a less visible impression, had to do for Colin what the kind peasant woman was doing for the desolate sister,—to take him away from the chamber of death, and make him lie down, and put aside altogether his own sensations on behalf of the younger and more susceptible sufferer. All that had to be done fell on Lauderdale; he made the necessary arrangements with a self-command which nothing disturbed, and when the bright, cloudless day had advanced, and he could satisfy himself that both the young, worn-out creatures, who were his children for the moment, had got the momentary solace of sleep, as was natural, he threw himself into poor Arthur's arm-chair and pondered with a troubled countenance on all that might follow. There he, too, slept and dozed, as Sora Antonia went softly to and fro, moved with pity. She had said her rosary for Arthur many a morning, and had done all she could to interest in his behalf that good St. Antonio of Padua, who was so charitable, and per-

haps might not be so particular about a matter of doctrine as St. Paul or St. Peter; for Sora Antonia was kind to the bottom of her heart, and could not bear to think of more than a thousand years or so of purgatory for the poor, young heretic. "The signorino was English and knew no better," she said to her patron saint, and comforted herself with the thought that the blessed Antonio would not fail to attend to her recommendation, and that she had done the best she could for her lodger; and out of the room where Alice slept the deep sleep of exhaustion the good woman made many voyages into the silent *salone*, where the shutters were closed upon the bare windows, though the triumphant sun streamed in at every crevice. She looked at Lauderdale, who dozed in the great chair, with curious looks of speculation and inquiry. He looked old and gray, thus sleeping in the daylight, and the traces of exhaustion in such a face as his were less touching than the lines in Alice's gentle countenance or the fading of Colin's brightness. He was the only member of the party who looked responsible to the eyes of Sora Antonia; and already she had a little romance in hand, and wondered much whether this uncle, or elder brother, or guardian, would be favorable to her young people. Thus, while the three watchers found a moment's sad rest after their long vigil, new hopes and thoughts of life already began to play about them unawares. The world will not stand still even to see the act of death accomplished; and the act of death itself, if Arthur was right in his hopes,—had not that already opened its brighter side upon the solitary soul which had gone forth alone?

The day after everything was finally over was Sunday,—the gayest and brightest of summer festal days. Colin and Lauderdale, who had on the day before carried their friend to his grave, met each other sadly at the table, where it was so strange to take up again the common thread of life as though Arthur Meredith had never had any share in it. It was Sunday under its brightest aspect; the village was very gay outside, and neither of them felt capable of introducing their sombre shadows into the flowery and sunny festa, the gayety of which jarred upon their sadness, and they had no heart to go about their usual occupations within. When they had swallowed their coffee together, they withdrew from each other into different corners, and tried to read, which was the only employment possible. Lauderdale, for his part, in his listlessness and fatigue, went to rummage among some books which a former occupant had left, and brought from among them—the strangest choice for him to make—a French novel, a kind of production utterly unknown to him. The chances are, he had forgotten it was Sunday; for his Scotch prejudices, though he held them lightly in theory, still held him fast in practice. When, however, he had pored over it vaguely for half an hour (for reading French was a laborious amusement to the imperfectly instructed scholar), Colin was roused out of studies which he, too, pursued with a very divided attention, by a sudden noise, and saw the little yellow volume spin through the air out of his friend's vigorous fingers, and drop ignominiously in a corner. "Me to be reading stuff like that!" said Lauderdale, with grim accents of self-disgust; "and him may be near to see what a fool is doing!" As he said this, he got up from his chair, and began to pace about the quiet, lonely room, violently endeavoring to recover the composure which he had not been able to preserve. Though he was older and stronger than the others, watching and grief had told upon his strength also; and in the glory of the summer morning which blazed all round and about, the soul of this wayfaring man grew sick within him. Something like a sob sounded into the silence. "I'm no asking if he's happy," Lauderdale burst forth; "I cannot feel as if I would esteem him the same if he felt nothing but joy to get away. You're a' infidels and unbelievers alike, with your happiness and your heaven. I'm no saying that it's less than the supreme joy to see the face he hoped to see; but joy's no inconsistent with pain. Will you tell me the callant, having a heart as you know he had, can think of us mourning for him and no care? Dinna speak of such inhuman imaginations to me."

"No," said Colin, softly. "But worst of all would be to think he was here," the young man continued, after a pause, "unable to communicate with us anyhow, by whatsoever effort. Don't think so, Lauderdale; that is the most inhuman imagination of all."

"I'm no so clear of that," said the phi-

losopher, subduing his hasty steps; "nae doubt there would be a pang in it, especially when there was information like that to bestow; but it's hard to tell, in our leemited condition, a' the capabilities of a soul. It might be a friend close by, and no yoursel', that put your best thought in your head, though you saw him not. I wouldna say that I would object to that. It's all a question of temperament, and, maybe, age," he continued, calming himself entirely down, and taking a seat beside Colin in the window. "The like of you expects response, and has no conception of life without it; but the like of me can be content without response," said Colin's guardian; and then he regarded his companion with eyes in which the love was veiled by a grave mist of meditation. "I would not object to take the charge of you in such a manner," he said, slowly. "But it's awfu' easy to dream dreams,—if anything on this earth could but make a man *know*"—and then there followed another pause. "He was awfu' pleased to teach," Lauderdale said, with an unsteady smile. "It's strange to think what should hinder him speaking now, when he has such news to tell. I never could make it out, for my part. Whiles my mind inclines to the thought that it must be a peaceable sleep that wraps them a' till the great day, which would account for the awfu' silence; but there's some things that go against that. That's what makes me most indignant at thae idiots with their spirit-rapping and gibberish. Does ony mortal with a heart within his bosom dare to think that, if love doesna open their sealed lips, any power in the world can?" cried the philosopher, whose emotion again got beyond his control. He got up again, and resumed his melancholy march up and down the room. "It's an awfu' marvel, beyond my reach," he said, "when a word of communication would make a' the difference, why it's no permitted, if it were but to keep a heart from breaking here and there."

"Perhaps it is our own fault," said Colin; "perhaps flesh and blood shrinks more than we are aware of from such a possibility; and perhaps"— here the young man paused a little, "indeed, it is not perhaps. Does not God himself choose to be our comforter?" said the youthful predestined priest; upon which the older and sadder man once more composed himself with a groan.

"Ay," said Lauderlade, "I can say nothing against that argument. I'm no denying it's the last and the greatest. I speak the voice of a man's yearning, but I've no intention of contravening the truth. He's gone like many a one before him. You and me must bide our time. I'll say no more of Arthur. The best thing you can do is to read a chapter. If we canna hear of him direct, which is no to be hoped for, we can take as good a grip as possible of the Friend that stands between us. It's little use trying to forget, or trying no to think and inquire and question. There is but one thing in the world, so far as I can see, that a man can feel a kind of sure of. Callant, read a chapter," said the philosopher, with a long sigh. He threw himself back, as he spoke, in the nearest chair, and Colin took his Bible dutifully to obey. The contrast between this request, expressed as any Scotch peasant would have expressed it, and the speculations which preceded it did not startle Colin, and he had opened the book by instinct in the latter part of St. John's Gospel, when he was disturbed by the entrance of Alice, who came in softly from her room without any warning. Her long attendance on her brother had withdrawn the color from her cheeks and the fulness from her figure so gradually, that it was only now in her mourning dress that her companions saw how pale and thin she had grown. Alice was not speculative, nor fanciful, nor addicted to undue exercise of the faculties of her own mind in any way. She was a dutiful woman, young and simple, and accepting God's will without inquiry or remonstrance. Though she had struggled long against the thought of Arthur's death, now that he *was* dead she recognized and submitted to the event which it was no longer possible to avert or change, with a tender and sweet resignation of which some women are capable. A more forlorn and desolate creature than Alice Mercdith did not exist on the earth, to all ordinary appearance, at this moment; but as she was not at all thinking of herself, that aspect of the case did not occur to her. She came out of her room very softly, with a faint smile on her face, holding some prayer-books in her hands. Up to this sad day it had been their custom to read prayers

together on the Sundays, being too far off Rome to make it practicable even for the stronger members of the party to go to church. Alice came up to Colin with her books in her hands, she said to him in a wistful whisper, "You will take his place," and pointed out to him silently the marks she had placed at the lessons and psalms. Then she knelt down between the two awed and astonished men, to say the familiar prayers which only a week ago Arthur himself had read with his dying voice. Though at times articulation was almost impossible to Colin, and Lauderdale breathed out of his deep chest an amen which sounded like a groan, Alice did not falter in her profound and still devotions. She went over the well-known prayers word by word, with eye and voice steadfast and rapt in the duty which was at the same time a consolation. There are women of such sweet loyalty and submission of spirit; but neither Lauderdale nor Colin had met with them before. Perhaps a certain passiveness of intellect had to do with it, as well as Alice's steady English training and custom of self-suppression; but it made a wonderful impression upon the two who were now the sole companions and guardians of the friendless young woman, and gave her indeed for the moment an absolute empire over them, of which Alice was altogether unconscious, and of which, even had she known it, she could have made no further use. When the Morning Prayer was almost concluded, it was she who indicated to Colin another mark in the prayer-book, at the prayer for Christ's church militant on earth, and they could even hear the whisper of her voice broken by an irrestrainable sob at the thanksgiving for all "thy servant departed this life in thy faith and fear," which Colin read with agitation and faltering. When they all rose from their knees, she turned from one to the other with her countenance for the first time disturbed. "You were very, very good to him," she said, softly. "God will bless you for it," and so sank into sobbing and tears, which were not to be subdued any longer, yet were not passionate nor out of accordance with her docile looks. After that, Alice recovered her calm, and began to occupy herself with them as if she had been their mother. "Have you been out?" she said. "You must not stay in and make yourself ill." This was addressed specially to Colin. "Please go out and take a walk; it will do you a great deal of good. If it had not been a great festa, it would not have been so bad; but if you go up to the Villa Conti, you will find nobody there. Go up behind the terrace, into the alleys where it is shady. There is one on the way to the Aldobrandini; you know it, Mr. Campbell. Oh, go, please; it is such a beautiful day, it will do you good."

"And you?" said Colin, who felt in his heart an inclination to kneel to her as if she had been a queen.

"I will stay at home to-day," said Alice. "I could not go out to-day; but I shall do very well. Sora Antonia will come in from mass presently. Oh, go out, please, and take a walk. Mr. Lauderdale, he will go if you tell him to go: you are both looking so pale."

"Come, Colin," said Lauderdale "she shall have her pleasure done this day, at least, whatsoever she commands. If there was anything within my power or his"—said the philosopher, with a strange discord that sounded like tears in his voice; but Alice stopped him short.

"Oh, yes," she said, softly, "it is very good of you to do it because I ask you. Mr. Campbell, you did not read the right lesson," she added, turning her worn face to Colin with a slight reproach.

"I read what I thought was better for us all, mourning as we are," said Colin, startled; upon which the sad little representative of law and order did her best to smile.

"I have always heard it said how wonderful it was how the lesson for the day always suited everybody's case," said Alice. "Arthur never would make any change for circumstances. He—he said it was as if God could ever be wanting," the faithful sister said, through her sobs; and then, again, put force upon herself: "I shall be here when you come back," she said, with her faint smile; and so, like a little princess, sent them away. The two men went their way up the slope and through the little town, in their black coats, casting two tall, sombre shadows into the sunshine and gayety of the bright piazza. There had been a procession that morning, and the rough pavement was strewed with sprigs of myrtle and box, and the air still retained a flavor of the candles, not quite obliterated by the whiff of incense

which came from the open doors of the cathedral, where even the heavy leathern curtain, generally suspended across the entrance, had been removed by reason of the crowd. People were kneeling even on the steps; peasants in their laced buskins, and Frascati women, made into countesses or duchesses, at the least, by the long white veil which streamed to their feet. The windows were all hung with brilliant draperies in honor of the morning's procession and the afternoon's Tombola. It was one of the very chief of Italian holydays, a festal Sunday in May, the month of Mary. No wonder the two sad Protestant Scotchmen, with mourning in their dress and in their hearts, felt themselves grow sick and faint as they went dutifully to the gardens of the Villa Conti, as they had been commanded. They did not so much as exchange a word with each other till they had passed through all that sunshine and reached the identical alley, a close arcade, overarched and shut in by the dense foliage of ilex-trees, to which their little sovereign had directed them. There was not a soul there, as she had prophesied. A tunnel scooped out of the damp, dewy soil would scarcely have been more absolutely shut in from the sunshine, scarcely could have been stiller or cooler, or more withdrawn from the blazing noonday, with its noises and rejoicings, than this narrow, sombre avenue. They strayed down its entire length, from one blue arch of daylight to the other, before they spoke; and then it was Landerdale who broke the silence, as if his thoughts, generally so busy and so vagrant, had never got beyond Alice Meredith's last words.

"Another time, Colin," said the philosopher, "you'll no make ony changes in the lesson for the day. Whiles it's awfu' hard to put up with the conditions o' a leemited intellect; but whiles they're half divine. I'm no pretending to be reasonable. She kens no more about reason than—the angels, maybe—no that I have ony personal acquaintance with their modes o' argument. I admit it's a new development to me; but a woman like yon, callant, would keep a man awfu' steady in the course of his life."

"Yes," said Colin; and then with a strange premonition, for which he himself could not account, he added, "She would keep a man steady, as you say; but he would find little response in her,—not that I regard her less respectfully, less reverentially than you do, Lauderdale," he went on, hurriedly, "but"—

"It wasna your opinion I was asking for," said the philosopher, somewhat morosely. "She's like none of the women you and me ken. I'm doubtful in my own mind whether that dutiful and obedient spirit has ever been our ideal in our country. Intellect's a grand gift, callant, baith to man and woman; but you'll no fly in my face and assert that it's more than second-best."

"I am not up to argument to-day," said Colin; and they walked back again the whole length of the avenue in silence. Perhaps a certain irritability, born of their mutual grief, was at the bottom of this momentary difference; but somehow, in the stillness, in the subdued leafy shade, which at first sight had been so congenial to his feelings, an indescribable shadow stole over Colin's mind,—a kind of indistinct fear and reluctance, which took no definite shape, but only crept over him like a mist over the face of the sun. His heart was profoundly touched at once by the grief, and by the self-command of Alice, and by her utter helplessness and dependence upon himself and his friend. Never before had he been so attracted towards her, nor felt so much that dangerous softening sentiment of pity and admiration, which leads to love. And yet, the two walked back silently under the dark ilex-trees, and across the piazza, which was now thronged with a gay and many-colored crowd. The brighter the scene grew around them, the more they shut themselves up in their own silence and sorrow, as was natural; and Colin at length began to recognize a new element, which filled him with vague uneasiness,—an element not in the least new to the perplexed cogitations of his guardian and anxious friend

CHAPTER XXXVI.

When they entered the *salone* on their return, the first object which met their eyes was the stately figure of Sora Antonia in full holiday costume, lately returned from mass. She had still her fan and her rosary depending from her wrist,—adjuncts almost equally necessary to devotion, as that is understood at Frascati,—and was still arrayed in the full splendors of the veil which, fastened over her hair, fell almost to her feet behind,

and gave grace and dignity to her tall and stately person. Sora Antonia was a dependant of the family Savvelli; scarcely a servant, though she had once belonged to the prince's household. She had charge of the palace at Frascati, which was never occupied except by a solitary ecclesiastic, the prince's brother, for whom the first floor was kept sacred. Even this sanctity, however, was sometimes invaded when a good chance offered of letting the *piano nobile* to some rich foreigner, which was the fate of all the other apartments in the house. Sora Antonia had charge of all the interests of the Savvelli in their deserted mansion. When the tenants did any damage, she made careful note of it, and did not in any respect neglect the interests of her master; nor was she inconsiderate of her own, but regarded it as a natural duty, when it proved expedient, to make a little money out of the Forestieri. "They give one trouble enough, the blessed Madonna knows," the good woman said, piously. But, notwithstanding these prudent cares, Sora Antonia was not only a very sensible woman according to her lights, but had a heart, and understood her duty to her neighbors. She made her salutations to the two friends when they entered with equal suavity, but addressed her explanations to Colin, who was not only her favorite in right of his youth and good looks, but who could understand her best. Colin, whose Italian was limited, called the excellent housekeeper Madama, a courtesy which naturally gained her heart; and she on her part appropriated to his use the title of Signorino, which was not quite so flattering; for Colin was still young enough to object to being called young. To-day, however, her address was more dignified; for the crisis was an important one. Before she began to speak the visitor sat down, which in itself was an act requiring explanation, especially as the table had been already arranged for dinner, and this was the last day in the world on which the strangers were likely to desire society. Sora Antonia took matters with a high hand, and in case of opposition secured for herself at least the first word.

"Pardon, caro signore mio," she said, "you are surprised to find me here. Very well; I am sorry to incommode the gentlemen, but I have to do my duty. The signorina is very young, and she has no one to take care of her. The signori are very good, very excellent, and kind. Ah, yes, I know it,—never was there such devotion to the poor sick friend;—nevertheless, the signori are but men, *senza complimenti*, and I am a woman who has been married and had children of my own, and know my duty. Until some proper person comes to take charge of the poor dear young lady, the signori will pardon me, but I must remain here."

"Does the signorina wish it?" asked Colin, with wondering looks; for the idea of another protector for Alice confounded him, he scarcely knew why.

"The signorina is not much more than a child," said Sora Antonia, loftily. "Besides, she has not been brought up like an Italian young lady, to know what is proper. Poverina! she does not understand anything about it; but the signori will excuse me,—I know my duty, and that is enough."

"Oh, yes, certainly," said Colin, "but then, in England, as you say, we have different ideas, and if the signorina does not wish"—

Here, however, he was interrupted by Lauderdale, who, having tardily apprehended the purport of Sora Antonia's communication, took it upon himself to make instant response in the best Italian he could muster. "*Avete molto buono, molto buono!*" cried Lauderdale, intending to say that she was very kind, and that he highly approved, though a chronic confusion in his mind, as to which was which, of the auxiliary verbs, made his meaning cloudy. "*Grazie, Abbiamo contento! Grazie,*" he added, with a little excitement and enthusiasm. Though he had used the wrong verb, Sora Antonia graciously comprehended his meaning. She was used to such little eccentricities of diction on the part of the Forestieri. She bowed her stately head to him with a look of approbation, and it would be vain to deny that the sense of having thus expressed himself clearly and eloquently in a foreign language conveyed a certain satisfaction to the mind of the philosopher.

"Bravo! The signore will speak very well if he perseveres," said Sora Antonia, graciously; "not to say that His Excellency is a man of experience, and perceives the justice of what I propose. No doubt, it will occupy a great deal of my time, but the other Forestieri have not arrived yet, and

how can one expect the Madonna Santissima and the blessed St. Antonio to take so much trouble in one's concerns if one will not exert one's self a little for one's fellow-creatures? As the signorina has not left her room yet, I will take away the inconvenience* for a few minutes, Scusa Signori," said Sora Antonia, and she went away with stately bearing and firm steps, which resounded through the house, to take off her veil and put aside her rosary. She had seated herself again in her indoor aspect, with the "Garden of the Soul" in her hand, before Alice came into the room; and, without doubt, she made a striking addition to the party. She was a Frascati woman born, and her costume, consequently, was perfect,—a costume less imposing than the scarlet Albano jacket, but not less calculated to do justice to the ample bust and stately head of the Roman peasant. The dress itself, the actual gown, in this as in other Italian costumes, was an indifferent matter. The important particulars were the long and delicate apron of embroidered muslin, the *busto* made of rich brocade and shaped to the exact Frascati model, and the large, soft, snowy kerchief with embroidered corners, which covered her full shoulders,—not to speak of the long heavy gold ear-rings and coral necklace which completed and enriched the dress. She sat apart and contemplated, if not the "Garden of the Soul," at least the little pictures in borders of lace-paper which were placed thickly between the leaves, while the melancholy meal was eaten at the table; for Sora Antonia had *educazione*, and had not come to intrude upon the privacy of her lodgers. Alice, for her part, made no remark upon the presence of this new guardian; she accepted it as she accepted everything else, as a matter of course, without even showing any painful sense of the circumstances which in Sora Antonia's opinion made this last precaution necessary. Her two companions, the only friends she seemed to have in the world, bore vicariously on her account the pain of this visible reminder that she was here in a false position and had no legitimate protector; but Alice had not yet awaked to any such sense on her own behalf. She took her place at the table and tried to swallow a morsel, and interested herself in the appetite of the others as if she had been their mother. "Try to eat something; it will make you ill if you do not," poor Alice said, in the abstraction and dead calm of her grief. Her own feeling was that she had been lifted far away from them into an atmosphere of age and distance and a kind of sad superiority, and to minister to some one was the grand condition under which Alice Meredith lived. As to the personal suffering, which was confined to herself, that did not so much matter; she had not been used to much sympathy, and it did not occur to her to look for it. Consequently, the only natural business which remained to her was to take a motherly charge of her two companions, and urge them to eat.

"You are not to mind me," she said, with an attempt at a smile, after dinner. "This is Sunday' to be sure; but, after to-day, you are just to go on as you used to do, and never mind. Thank you, I should like it better. I shall always be here, you know, when you come back from Rome, or wherever you wish to go. But you must not mind for me."

Lauderdale and Colin exchanged looks almost without being aware of it. "But you would like—somebody to be sent for—or something done?" said Lauderdale. He was a great deal more confused in having to suggest this than Alice was, who kept looking at him, her eyes dilated with weariness and tears, yet soft and clear as the eyes of a child. He could not say to her, in so many words, "It is impossible for you to remain with us." All he could do was to falter and hesitate, and grow confused, under the limpid, sorrowful look which she bent upon him from the distant heaven of her resignation and innocence. "You would like your friends——somebody to be written to," said Lauderdale; and then, afraid to have given her pain by the suggestion, went on hurriedly: "I'm old enough to be your father, and no a thought in my mind but to do you service," he said. "Tell me what you would like best. Colin, thank God! is strong, and has little need of me. I'll take you home, or do whatever you please; for I'm old enough to be your father, my poor bairn!" said the tender-hearted philosopher, and drew near to her, and put out his hand with an impulse of pitiful and protecting kindness which touched the heart of Alice, and yet filled her with momentary surprise. She, on her own side, was roused a little, not to think of herself,

* "Levo l'incomodo," a homely expression of Italian politeness on leaving a room.

but to remember what appeared to her a duty unfulfilled.

"Oh, Mr. Lauderdale! Arthur said I might tell you," said Alice. "Papa! you heard what he said about papa? I ought to write and tell him what has happened. Perhaps I ought to tell you from the beginning," she continued after composing herself a little. "We left home without his consent—indeed, he did not know. For dear Arthur," said the poor girl, turning her appealing eyes from one to the other, "could not approve of his ways. He did something that Arthur thought was wrong. I cannot tell you about it," said Alice through her tears; "it did not make so much difference to me. I think I ought to write and tell him, and that Arthur forgave him at the last. Oh, tell me, please, what do you think I should do?"

"If you would like to go home, I'll take you home," said Lauderdale. "He did not mean ony harm, poor callant, but he's left an awfu' burden on you."

"Go home!" said Alice, with a slight shudder. "Do you think I ought—do you think I must? I do not care for myself, but Mrs. Meredith, you know"—she added, with a momentary blush; and then the friends began to perceive another unforeseen lion in the way.

"Out of my own head," said Lauderdale, who took the whole charge of this business on himself, and would not permit Colin to interfere, "I wrote your father a kind of a letter. If you are able to hear the—the event—which has left us a' mourning—named in common words, I'll read you what I have written. Poor bairn, you're awfu' young and awfu' tender to have such affairs in hand! Are you sure you are able to bear it, and can listen to what I have said?"

"Ah, I have borne it," said poor Alice. "I cannot deceive myself, nor think Arthur is still here. What does it matter then about saying it? Oh, yes, I can bear anything; it is only me to bear now and it doesn't matter. It was very kind of you to write. I should like to know what you have said."

Colin who could do nothing else for her, put forward the arm-chair with the cushions towards the table, and Sora Antonia put down the "Garden of the Soul" and drew a little nearer with her heavy, firm foot, which shook the house. She comprehended that something was going on which would tax the signorina's strength, and brought her solid, steady succor to be in readiness. The pale little girl turned and smiled upon them both as she took the chair Colin had brought her. She was herself quite steady in her weakness and grief and loneliness. Sora Antonia was not wanted there; and Colin drew her aside to the window, where she told him all about the fireworks that were to be in the evening, and her hopes that after a while the signorina would be able to "distract herself" a little and recover her spirits; to which Colin assented dutifully, watching from where he stood the pale looks of the friendless young woman,—friendless beyond disguise or possible self-deception, with a step-mother whom she blushed to mention reigning in her father's house. Colin's thoughts were many and tumultuous as he stood behind in the window, watching Alice and listening to Sora Antonia's descriptions of the fireworks. Was it possible that perhaps his duty to his neighbor required from him the most costly of all offerings, the rashest of all possible actions? He stood behind, growing more and more excited in the utter quiet. The thought that had dawned upon him under the ilex trees came nearer and grew more familiar, and as he contemplated it, he seemed to recognize all that visible machinery of Providence bringing about the great event which youth decides upon so easily. While this vision grew before his mind, Alice was wiping off the tears which obliterated Lauderdale's letter even to her patient eyes; for, docile and dutiful as she was, it was yet terrible to read in calm, distinct words, which put the matter beyond all doubt, the announcement of "what had happened." This is what Lauderdale said:—

"Sir,— It is a great grief to me to inform you of an event for which I have no way of knowing whether you are prepared or not. Your son, Arthur Meredith, has been living here for the last three months in declining health, and on Thursday last died in great comfort and constancy of mind. It is not for me, a stranger to offer vain words of consolation, but his end was such as any man might be well content to have, and he entered upon his new life joyfully, without any shadow on his mind. As far as love and friendship could soothe the sufferings that were inevitable, he had both; for his sister never left his bedside, and myself and my friend, Colin Campbell, were with him constantly, to his satisfaction. His sister remains under our care.

I who write am no longer a young man, and know what is due to a young creature of her tender years; so that you may satisfy yourself she is safe until such time as you can communicate with me, which I will look for as soon as a reply is practicable, and in the mean time remain,

"Your son's faithful friend and mourner,
"W. LAUDERDALE."

Alice lingered over this letter, reading it, and crying, and whispering to Lauderdale a long time, as Colin thought. She found it easier, somehow, to tell her story fully to the elder man. She told him that Mrs. Meredith had "come home suddenly," which was her gentle version of a sad domestic history,—that nobody had known of her father's second marriage until the step-mother arrived, without any warning, with a train of children. Alice's mild words did not give Lauderdale any very lively picture of the dismay of the household at this unlooked-for apparition; but he understood enough to condemn Arthur less severely than he had been disposed to do. This sudden catastrophe had happened just after the other misery of the bank failure, which had ruined so many; and poor Meredith had no alternative between leaving his sister to the tender mercies of an underbred and possibly disreputable step-mother, or bringing her with him when he retired to die; and Alice, though she still cried for "poor papa," recoiled a little from the conclusion of Lauderdale's letter. "I have enough to live upon," she said, softly, with an appealing glance at her companion. "If you were to say that I was quite safe, would not that be enough?" and it was very hard for Lauderdale to convince her that her father's judgment must be appealed to in such a matter. When she saw he was not to be moved on this point, she sighed and submitted; but it was clearly apparent that as yet, occupied as she was by her grief, the idea that her situation here was embarrassing to her companions or unsuitable for herself had not occurred to Alice. When she retired, under the escort of Sora Antonia, the two friends had a consultation over this perplexing matter; and Lauderdale's sketch—filled in, perhaps, a little from his imagination—of the home she had left, plunged Colin into deeper and deeper thought. "No doubt he'll send some answer," the philosopher said. "He may not be worthy to have the charge of her, but he's aye her father. It's hard to ken whether it's better or worse that she should be unconscious like this of onything embarrassing in her position, which is a' the more wonderful, as she's a real honest woman, and no way intellectual nor exalted. You and me, Colin," said Lauderdale, looking up in his young companion's face, "must take good care that she does not find it out from us."

"Of course," said Colin, with involuntary testiness; "but I do not see what her father has to do with it," continued the young man. "She cannot possibly return to such a home."

"Her father is the best judge of that," said Lauderdale; "she canna remain with you and me."

And there the conversation dropped, but not the subject. Colin was not in love with Alice; he had, indeed, vague but bright in the clouds before him, an altogether different ideal woman; and his heart was in the career which he again saw opening before him,—the life in which he meant to serve God and his country, and which at the present moment would admit of no rashly formed ties. Was it in consequence of these hindrances that this new thing loomed so large before Colin's inexperienced eyes? If he had longed for it with youthful passion, he would have put force on himself and restrained his longing; but the temptation took another shape. It was as if a maiden knight at the outset of his career had been tempted to pass by a helpless creature and leave her wrongs unredressed. The young Bayard could do anything but this.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

In the mean time at least a fortnight must pass before they could expect an answer to Lauderdale's letter. During that time they returned to all their old habits, with the strange and melancholy difference that Arthur, once the centre of all, was no longer there. Every day of this time increased the development of Colin's new thoughts, until the unknown father of Alice had grown, in his eyes, into a cruel and profligate tyrant, ready to drag his daughter home and plunge her into depraved society, without any regard for either her happiness or her honor. Colin had, indeed, in his own mind, in strictest privacy and seclusion of thought, indited an imaginary letter, eloquent with youthful

indignation to inform this unworthy parent that his deserted daughter had found a better protector; but he was very silent about these cogitations of his, and did not share them even with Lauderdale. And there were moments when Colin felt the seriousness of the position, and found it very hard that such a necessity should meet him in the face at the beginning of his career. Sometimes in the sudden darkening, out of the rosy clouds which hung over the Campagna, the face of the impossible woman, the ideal creature, her who could have divined the thoughts in his mind and the movements in his heart before they came into being, would glance suddenly out upon him for an instant, and then disappear, waving a shadowy farewell, and leaving in his mind a strange blank, which the sight of Alice rather increased than removed. That ineffable mate and companion was never to be his, the young man thought. True, he had never met her, nor come upon any trace of her footsteps; for Matty Frankland at her best never could have been she. But yet, as long as he was unbound by other tie or affection, this vision was the "not impossible She" to Colin as to all men; and this he had to give up; for Alice, most gentle, patient Alice, whom it was not in the heart of man to be otherwise than tender of,—she who had need of him, and whom his very nature bound him to protect and cherish,—was not that woman. At other moments he thought of his own life, for which still so much training was necessary, and which he should have entered in the full freedom of his youth, and was profoundly aware of the incumbered and helpless trim in which he must go into the battle, obliged to take thought not of his work only, and the best means of doing it, but of those cares of living which lie so lightly on a young man alone. There may be some of Colin's friends who will think the less of him for this struggle in his mind; and there may be many who will think with justice that, unless he could have offered love to Alice, he had no right to offer her himself and his life, —an opinion in which his historian fully agrees. But then this gift, though less than the best, was a long way superior to anything else which, at the present moment, was likely to be offered to the friendless girl. If he could have laid at her feet the heart, which is the only true exchange under such circumstances, the chances are that Alice, in her simplicity and gentleness, would have been sadly puzzled what to do with that passionate and ungovernable thing. What he really could offer her—affection, tenderness, protection—was clearly comprehensible to her. She had no other idea of love than was included in those attributes and phases of it. These considerations justified Colin in the step which he contemplated, or rather in the step which he did not contemplate, but felt to be necessary and incumbent upon him. It sometimes occurred to him how, if he had been prudent and taken Lauderdale's advice, and eschewed at the beginning the close connection with Meredith and his sister, which he had entered into with his eyes open, and with a consciousness even that it might affect his life, this embarrassing situation might never have come into being; and then he smiled to himself, with youthful superiority, contemplating what seemed so plainly the meaning of Providence, and asking himself how he, by a momentary exercise of his own will, could have overthrown that distinct celestial intention. On the whole, it was comforting to think that everything had been arranged beforehand by agencies so very clear and traceable; and with this conclusion of the argument he left off, as near contented as possible, and not indisposed to enjoy the advantages which were palpable before him; for, though they were not the eyes he had dreamed of, there was a sweetness very well worthy of close study in Alice Meredith's eyes.

The days passed very quietly in this time of suspense. The society of the two strangers, who were more to her in her sorrow than all her kindred, supported the lonely girl more than she was aware of,—more than any one could have believed. They were absent during the greater part of the day, and left her unmolested to the tears that would come, notwithstanding all her patience; and they returned to her in the evening with attentions and cares to which she had never been accustomed, devoting two original and powerful minds, of an order at once higher and more homely than any which she had ever encountered, to her amusement and consolation. Alice had never known before what it was to have ordinary life and daily occurrences brightened by the thick-coming fancies, the tender play of

word and thought, which now surrounded her. She had heard clever talk afar off "in society," and been awe-stricken by the sound of it, and she had heard Arthur and his friends uttering much fine-sounding language upon subjects not generally in her way; but she was utterly unused to that action of uncommon minds upon common things which gives so much charm to the ordinary intercourse of life. All they could think of to lighten the atmosphere of the house in which she sat in her deep mourning, absorbed for hours together in those thoughts of the dead to which her needlework afforded little relief, they did with devotion, suspending their own talk and occupations to occupy themselves with her. Colin read "In Memoriam" to her till her heart melted and relieved itself in sweet abundant tears; and Lauderdale talked and told her many a homely history of that common course of humanity, full of sorrows sorer than her own, which fills young minds with awe. Between them they roused Alice to a higher platform, a different atmosphere, than she had known before; and she raised herself up after them with a half-bewildered sense of elevation, not understanding how it was; and so the long days which were so hard, and which nothing in the world could save from being hard, brightened towards the end, not certainly into anything that could be called pleasure, but into a sad expansion and elevation of heart, in which faintly appeared those beginnings of profound and deep happiness which are not incompatible with grief, and yet are stronger and more inspiring than joy. While this was going on, unconsciously to any one concerned, Sora Antonia, in her white kerchief and apron, sometimes knitting, sometimes with her distaff like a buxom Fate, sat and twisted her thread and turned her spindle a little behind, yet not out of reach, keeping a wary eye upon her charge. She, too, interposed, sometimes her own experiences, sometimes her own comments upon life and things in general, into the conversation; and, whether it was that Sora Antonia's mind was really of a superior order, or that the stately Roman speech threw a refining color upon her narratives, it is certain that the interpellations of the Italian peasant fell without any sensible derogation into the strain of lofty yet familiar talk which was meant to wean Alice from her special grief. Sora Antonia told them of the other Forestieri who had lived like themselves in the Savvelli palace: who had come for health and yet had died, leaving the saddest mourners,—helpless widows and little children, heart-broken fathers and mothers, perhaps the least consolable of all. Life was such, she said solemnly, bowing her stately head. She herself, of a hardy race, and strong, as the signori saw, had not she buried her children, for whom she would have gladly died? But the good God had not permitted her to die. Alice cried silently as she heard all this; she kissed Sora Antonia, who, for her part, had outlived her tears, and with a natural impulse turned to Colin, who was young, and in whose heart, as in her own, there must live a natural protest against this awful necessity of separation and misery; and thus it came to be Colin's turn to interpose, and he came on the field once more with "In Memoriam," and with other poems which were sweet to hear, and soothed her even when she only partly entered into their meaning. A woman has an advantage under such circumstances. By means of her sympathy and gratitude, and the still deeper feeling which grew unconsciously in her heart towards him who read, she came to believe that she, too, understood and appreciated what was to him so clear and so touching. A kind of spiritual magnetism worked upon Alice, and, to all visible appearance, expanded and enlarged her mind. It was not that her intellect itself grew, or that she understood all the beautiful imaginations, all the tender philosophies thus unfolded to her; but she was united in a singular union of affectionate companionship with those who did understand, and even to herself she appeared able to see, if not with her own eyes at least with theirs, the new beauties and solemnities of which she had not dreamed before. This strange process went on day by day without any one being aware of it; and even Lauderdale had almost forgotten that their guardianship of Alice was only for the moment, and that the state of affairs altogether was provisionary and could not possibly continue, when an answer reached him to his letter. He was alone when he received it, and all that evening said nothing on the subject until Alice had retired with her watchful attendant; then, without a word of comment, he put it into Colin's hand. It was written

in a stilted hand, like that of one unaccustomed to writing, and was not quite irreproachable even in its spelling. This was what Lauderdale's correspondent said :—

"Sir,—Your letter has had such a bad effect upon the health of my dear husband, that I beg you wont trouble him with any more such communications. If its meant to get money, that's vain ; for neither him nor me knows anything about the friends Arthur may have picked up. If he had stayed at home, he would have received every attention. As for his ungrateful sister, I wont have anything to say to her. Mr. Meredith is very ill, and, for anything I know, may never rise from a bed of sickness, where he has been thrown by hearing this news so sudden ; but I take upon me to let her know as he will have nothing to say to one that could behave so badly as she has done. I am always for making friends ; but she knows she cannot expect much kindness from me after all that has happened. She has money enough to live on, and she can do as she pleases. Considering what her ingratitude has brought her dear father to, and that I may be left alone to manage everything before many days are past, you will please to consider that here is an end of it, and not write any more begging letters to me.

"Julia Meredith."

This communication Colin read with a beating heart. It was so different from what he expected, and left him so free to carry out the dawning resolution which he had imagined himself executing in the face of tyrannical resistance, that he felt at first like a man who has been straining hard at a rope and is suddenly thrown down by the instantaneous stoppage of the pressure on the other side. When he had picked himself up, the facts of the case rushed on him distinct and unmistakable. The time had now come when the lost and friendless maiden stood in the path of the true knight. Was he to leave her there to fight her way in the hard world by herself, without defence or protection, because, sweet and fair and pure as she was, she was not the lady of his dreams? He made up his mind at once with a thrill of generous warmth, but at the same time felt himself saying for ever and ever farewell to that ideal lady who henceforward, in earth or heaven, could never be his. This passed while he was looking at the letter which already his rapid eye had read and comprehended. "So there is an end of your hopes," said Colin. "Now we are the only friends she has in the world,—as I have always thought."

"Softly," said Lauderdale. "Callants like you aye rin away with the half of an idea. This is an ignorant woman's letter, that is glad to get rid of her. The father will mend, and then he'll take her out of our hands."

"He shall do nothing of the kind," said Colin, hotly. "You speak as if she was a piece of furniture ; I look upon her as a sacred charge. We are responsible to Meredith for his sister's comfort and—happiness," said the young man, who during this conversation preferred not to meet his companion's eye.

"Ay!" said Lauderdale, dryly, "that's an awfu' charge for the like of you and me. It's more that I ever calculated on, Colin. To see her safe home, and in the hands of her friends"—

"Lauderdale, do not be so heartless! cannot you see that she has no friends?" cried Colin; "not a protector in the world except"—

"Callant, dinna deceive yourself," said Lauderdale; "it's no a matter for hasty judgment; we have nae right to pass sentence on a man's character. He's her father, and it's her duty to obey him. I'm no heeding about that silly woman's letter. Mr. Meredith will mend. I'm here to take care of you," said Colin's guardian. "Colin, hold your peace. You're no to do for a moment's excitement, for pity and ruth and your own tender heart, what you may regret all your life. Sit down and keep still. You are only a callant, too young to take burdens on yourself; there is but one way that the like of you can protect the like of her,—and that is no to be thought of, as you consented with your own mouth."

"I am aware of that," said Colin, who had risen up in his excitement. "There is but one way. Matters have changed since we spoke of it first."

"I would like to know how far they have changed," said Lauderdale. "Colin, take heed to what I say ; if it's love I'll no speak a word ; I may disapprove a' the circumstances, and find fault with every step ye take ; but if it's love"—

"Hush!" said Colin, standing upright, and meeting his friend's eye ; "if it should happen to be my future wife we are speaking

of, my feelings toward her are not to be discussed with any man in the world."

They looked at each other thus for a moment, the one anxious and scrutinizing, the other facing him with blank brightness, and a smile which afforded no information. Perhaps Lauderdale understood all that was implied in that blank; at all events, his own delicate sense of honor could not refuse to admit Colin's plea. He turned away, shaking his head, and groaning privately under his breath; while Colin, struck with compunction, having shut himself up for an instant, unfolded again, that crisis being over, with all the happy grace of apology natural to his disposition. "You are not 'any man in the world,'" he said, with a short laugh, which implied emotion. "Forgive me, Lauderdale; and now you know very well what I am going to do."

"Oh, ay, I ken what you are going to do; I kent three months ago, for that matter," said the philosopher. "A man acts no from circumstances, as is generally supposed, but from his ain nature." When he had given forth this oracular utterance, Lauderdale went straight off to his room without exchanging another word with Colin. He was satisfied in a way with this mate for his charge, and belonged to too lowly a level of society to give profound importance to the inexpediency of early marriages,—and he was fond of Alice, and admired her sweet looks and sweet ways, and respected her self-command and patience; nevertheless, he, too, sighed, and recognized the departure of the ideal woman, who to him as little as to Colin resembled Alice,—and thus it was understood between them how it was to be.

All this, it may be imagined, was little compatible with that reverential regard for womankind in general which both the friends entertained, and evidenced a security in respect to Alice's inclinations which was not altogether complimentary to her. And yet it was highly complimentary in a sense; for this security arose from their appreciation of the spotless, unawakened heart with which they had to deal. If Colin entertained little doubt of being accepted when he made his proposition, it was not because he had an overweening idea of himself, or imagined Alice "in love" with him according to the vulgar expression. A certain chivalrous, primitive sense of righteous and natural necessity was in his confidence. The forlorn maiden, knowing the knight to be honest and true, would accept his protection loyally and simply, without bewildering herself with dreams of choice where no choice was, and having accepted, would love and cleave as was her nature. To be sure there were types of women less acquiescent; and we have already said that Alice did not bear the features of the ideal of which Colin had dreamed: but such was the explanation of his confidence. Alice showed little distress when she saw her step-mother's letter except for her father's illness, though even that seemed rather consolatory to her than otherwise, as a proof of his love for Arthur. As for Mrs. Meredith's refusal to interfere on her behalf, she was clearly relieved by the intimation; and things went on as before for another week or two, until Sora Antonia, who had now other tenants arriving and many occupations in hand, began to murmur a little over the watch which she would not relinquish. "Is it thus young ladies are left in England," she asked with a little indignation, "without any one to take care of them except the signori, who, though amiable and excellent, are only men? or when may madama be expected from England who is to take charge of the signorina?" It was after this question had been put to him with some force one evening, that Colin proposed to Alice, who was beginning to lift her head again like a flower after a storm, and to show symptoms of awakening from the first heaviness of grief, to go out with him and visit those ilex avenues, which had now so many associations for the strangers. She went with a faint sense of pleasure in her heart through the afternoon sunshine, looking wistfully through her black veil at the many cheerful groups on the way, and clinging to Colin's arm when a kind neighbor spoke to her in pity and condolence. She put up her veil when they came to the favorite avenue, where Lauderdale and Colin walked so often. Nothing could be more silent, more cool and secluded than this verdant cloister, where, with the sunshine still blazing everywhere around, the shade and the quiet were equally profound and unbroken. They walked once or twice up and down, remarking now and then upon the curious network of the branches, which, out of reach of the sun, were all bare and stripped of their foliage, and upon the blue

blaze of daylight at either opening, where the low arch of dark verdure framed in a space of brilliant Italian sky. Then they both became silent, and grew conscious of it; and it was then, just as Alice for the first time began to remember the privileges and penalties of her womanhood, that Colin spoke,—

"I brought you here to speak to you," he said. "I have a great deal to say. That letter that Lauderdale showed you did not vex you; did it? Will you tell me? Arthur made me one of your guardians, and, whatever you may decide upon, that is a sacred bond."

"Yes, oh, yes," said Alice, with tears, "I know how kind you both are. No, it did not vex me, except about papa. I was rather glad, if I may say so, that she did not send for me home. It is not—a—home—like what it used to be," said Alice; and then, perhaps because something in Colin's looks had advertised her of what was coming, perhaps because the awakening sense sprung up in a moment, after long torpor, a sudden change came upon her face. "I have given you a great deal of trouble," she said; "I am like somebody who has had a terrible fall, —as soon as I come to myself I shall go away. It is very wrong of me to detain you here."

"You are not detaining us," said Colin, who, notwithstanding, was a little startled and alarmed; "and you must not talk of going away. Where would you go? Are not we your friends,—the friends you know best in Italy? You must not think of going away."

But even these very words thus repeated acted like an awakening spell upon Alice. "I cannot tell what I have been thinking of," she said. "I suppose it is staying indoors and forgetting everything. I do not seem to know even how long it is. Oh, yes, you are my kindest friends. Nobody ever was so good to me; but, then, you are only—gentlemen," said Alice, suddenly withdrawing her hand from Colin's arm, and blushing over all her pallid face. "Ah! I see now how stupid I have been to put off so long. And I am sure I must have detained you here."

"No," said Colin, "do not say so; but I have something more to say to you. You are too young and too delicate to face the world alone, and your people at home are not going to claim you. I am a poor man now, and I never can be rich, but I would protect you and support you if you would have me. Will you trust me to take care of you, Alice, not for this moment, but always? I think it would be the best thing for us both."

"Mr. Campbell, I don't understand you," said Alice, trembling and casting a glance up at him of wistful surprise and uncertainty. There was an eager, timid inquiry in her eyes besides the bewilderment. She seemed to say, "What is it you mean?" "Is *that* what you mean?" and Colin answered by taking her hand again and drawing it through his arm.

"Whether you will have me or not," he said, "there is always the bond between us which Arthur has made sacred, and you must lean on me all the same. I think you will see what I mean if you consider it. There is only one way that I can be your true protector and guardian, and that is if you will consent to marry me, Alice. Will you? You know I have nothing to offer you; but I can work for you, and take care of you, and with me you would not be alone."

It was a strange way of putting it certainly,—very different from what Colin had intended to say, strangely different from the love-tale that had glided through his imagination by times since he became a man; but he was very earnest and sincere in what he said, and the innocent girl beside him was no critic in such matters. She trembled more and more, but she leaned upon him and heard him out with anxious attention. When he had ended, there was a pause, during which Colin, who had not hitherto been doubtful, began himself to feel anxious; and then Alice once more gave a wistful, inquiring look at his face.

"Don't be angry with me," she said; "it is so hard to know what to say. If you would tell me one thing quite truly and frankly— Would it not do you a great deal of harm if this was to happen as you say?"

"No," said Colin. When he said the word he could not help remembering, in spite of himself, the change it would make in his young prospects; but the result was only that he repeated his negative with more warmth. "It can do me only good," said Colin, yielding to the natural temptations of the moment, "and I think I might do something for your

happiness too. It is for you to decide,—do not decide against me, Alice," said the young man; "I cannot part with you now."

"Ah!"— said Alice with a long breath. "If it only would not do you any harm," she added, a moment after, once more with that inquiring look. The inquiry was one which could be answered but in one way, and Colin was not a man to remain unmoved by the wistful, sweet eyes thus raised to him, and by the tender dependence of the clinging arm. He set her doubts at rest almost as eloquently, and quite as warmly, as if she had indeed been that woman who had disappeared among the clouds forever, and led her home to Sora Antonia with a fond care, which was very sweet to the forlorn little maiden, and not irksome by any means to the magnanimous knight. Thus the decisive step was taken in obedience to the necessities of the position, and the arrangements (as Colin had decided upon them) of Providence. When he met Lauderdale and informed him of the new event, the young man looked flushed and happy, as was natural in the circumstances, and disposed of all the objections of prudence with great facility and satisfaction. It was a moonlight night, and Colin and his friend went out to the *loggia* on the roof of the house, and plunged into a sea of discussion, through which the young lover steered triumphantly the frailest bark of argument that ever held water. But, when the talk was over, and Colin, before he followed Lauderdale down-stairs, turned round to take a parting look at the Campagna, which lay under them like a great map in the moonlight, the old apparition looked out once more from the clouds, pale and distant, and again seemed to wave to him a shadowy farewell. "Farewell! farewell! in heaven nor in earth will you ever find me," sighed the woman of Colin's imagination, dispersing into thin white mists and specks of clouds; and the young man went to rest with a vague sense of loss in his heart. The sleep of Alice was sweeter than that of Colin on this first night of their betrothal; but at that one period of existence, it often happens that the woman, for once in her life, has the advantage. And thus it was that the event, foreseen by Lauderdale on board the steamer at the beginning of their acquaintance, actually came to pass.

PART XIII.—CHAPTER XXXVIII.

This important decision, when at last finally settled, necessitated other steps more embarrassing and difficult than anything that could be discussed in the ilex avenue. Even Sora Antonia's protection ceased to be altogether satisfactory to the suddenly-awakened mind of Alice, who at the same time was so unaccustomed to think or act for herself that she knew not what to do in the emergency. If Colin had been the kind of man who would have decided for her at once, and indicated what he thought she ought to do, Alice was the kind of woman to act steadily and bravely upon the indication. But, unfortunately, Colin did not understand how to dictate to a woman, having known most intimately of all womankind his mother, who was treated after an altogether different fashion; and Lauderdale, though sufficiently aware of the embarrassing nature of their position, belonged, notwithstanding his natural refinement, to a class which sets no great store upon punctilio. Now that everything was settled between the "young folk," Alice's unprotected state did not distress him so much as formerly. The marriage, which must take place immediately, was already in his eye a sufficient shelter for the solitary girl; and the indecorum of the whole business no longer occurred to him. As for Colin, he, as was natural, regarded with a certain excitement the strange step he was about to take, not knowing what anybody would think of it, nor how he was to live with his bride, nor what influence an act so unsuitable to his circumstances would have upon his prospects and position. It was of a piece with the rashness and visionary character of the whole transaction, that Alice's money, which she had herself recurred to as "enough to live upon," never entered into the calculations of the young man who was going to marry on the Snell scholarship, without being at all convinced in his own mind that the Snell scholarship could be held by a married man. A married man! the title had an absurd sound as applied to himself, even in his own ears. He was just over one-and-twenty, and had not a penny in the world. But these considerations, after all, had not half so much effect upon him as the thought of his mother's grave countenance when she should read his next letter, and the displeasure of his father, who perhaps already regarded with a not altogether satisfied eye the spectacle of a son of his gone abroad for his health. If Colin could but have made sure of the nature of the reception he was likely to have at Ramore, prudential considerations of any other character would have had but a momentary weight; but at present, amid his other perplexities, the young man felt a certain boyish confusion at the thought of asking his mother to receive and recognize his wife. However, the important letter had been written and was on its way, and he could only hope that his previous letters had prepared the household for that startling intimation. Apart from Ramore, the matter had a less serious aspect; for Colin, who had been poor all his life, no more believed in poverty than if he had been a prince, and had a certain instinctive certainty of getting what he wanted, which belonged to his youth. Besides, he was not a poor gentleman, hampered and helpless, but knew, at the worst, that he could always work for his wife. At the same time, in the midst of all the seriousness of the position,—of his tender affection for Alice, and reverence for her helplessness, and even of that inexpressible blank and sense of disappointment in his heart which even his affection could not quite neutralize,—a curious sense of humor, and feeling that the whole matter was a kind of practical joke on a grand scale, intruded into Colin's ideas from time to time, and made him laugh, and then made him furious with himself; for Alice, to be sure, saw no joke in the matter. She was, indeed, altogether wanting in the sense of humor, if even her grief would have permitted her to exercise it, and was sufficiently occupied by the real difficulties of her position, secluding herself in Sora Antonia's apartments, and wavering in an agony of timidity and uncertainty over the idea of leaving that kind protector and going somewhere else, even though among strangers, in order to obey the necessary proprieties. She had not a soul to consult about what she should do, except Sora Antonia herself and Lauderdale, neither of whom now thought it necessary to suggest a removal on the part of either of the young people; and though thoughts of going into Rome, and finding somebody who would give her shelter for a week or two till Colin's arrangements were complete, hovered in the mind of Alice, she

had no courage to carry out such an idea, being still in her first grief, poor child, although this new excitement had entered into her life.

As for Colin, affairs went much less easily with him when he betook himself to the English clergyman to ask his services. The inquiries instituted by this new judge were of a kind altogether unforeseen by the thoughtless young man. To be sure, a mourning sister is not usually married a few weeks after her brother's death, and the questioner was justified in thinking the circumstance strange. Nor was it at all difficult to elicit from Colin a story which, viewed by suspicious and ignorant eyes, threw quite a different color on the business. The young lady was the daughter of Mr. Meredith of Maltby, as the clergyman, who had laid Arthur in his grave, was already aware. She was young, under age, and her father had not been consulted about her proposed marriage; and she was at present entirely in the hands and under the influence of the young Scotchman, who, though his manners were considered irreproachable by Miss Matty Frankland, who was a critic in manners, still lacked certain particulars in his general demeanor by which the higher class of Englishmen are distinguished. He was more interested, more transparent, more expressive than he would probably have been, had he been entirely Alice's equal; and he was slightly wanting in calmness and that soft haze of impertinence which sets off good-breeding,—in short, he had not the full ring of the genuine metal; and a man who lived in Rome, and was used to stories of adventures and interested marriages, not unnaturally jumped at the conclusion that Colin (being a Scotchman beside, and consequently, the impersonation, save the mark! of money-getting) was bent upon securing to himself the poor little girl's fortune. Before the cross-examination was done, Colin began somehow to feel himself a suspicious character; for it is astonishing what an effect there is in that bland look of superior penetration and air of seeing through a subject, however aware the person under examination may be that his judge knows nothing about it. Then the investigator turned the discussion upon pecuniary matters, which after all was the branch of examination for which Colin was least prepared.

"Miss Meredith has some fortune, I presume?" he said. "Is it at her own disposal? for on this, as well as on other matters, it appears to me absolutely necessary that her father should be consulted."

"I have already told you that her father has been consulted," said Colin, with a little vexation, "and you have seen the answer to my friend's letter. I have not the least idea what her fortune is, or if she has any. Yes, I recollect she said she had enough to live upon; but it did not occur to me to make any inquiries on the subject," said the young man; which more than ever confirmed his questioner that this was not a member of the higher class with whom he had to deal.

"And you?" he said. "Your friends are aware, I presume—and your means are sufficient to maintain"—

"I," said Colin, who with difficulty restrained a smile,—"I have not very much; but I am quite able to work for my wife. It seems to me, however, that this examination is more than I bargained for. If Miss Meredith is satisfied on these points, that is surely enough,—seeing, unfortunately that she has no one to stand by her"—

"I beg your pardon," said the clergyman, "it is the duty of my office to stand by her. I do not see that I can carry out your wishes,—certainly not without having a conversation with the young lady. I cannot say that I feel satisfied; not that I blame you, of course,—but you are a very young man, and your feelings, you know, being involved. However, my wife and myself will see Miss Meredith, and you can call on me again."

"Very well," said Colin, getting up; and then, after making a step or two to the door, he returned. "I am anxious to have everything concluded the earliest possible moment," he said. "Pray do not lose any time. She is very solitary, and has no proper protector," Colin continued, with an ingenuous flush on his face. He looked so young, so honest, and earnest, that even experience was shaken for the moment by the sight of Truth. But then it is the business of experience to fence off Truth, and defy the impressions of Nature, and so the representative of authority, though shaken for a moment, did not give in.

"By the by, I fear I did not understand you," he said. "You are not living in the same house? Considering all the circumstances, I cannot think that proper. Either

she should find another home, or you should leave the house,—any gentleman would have thought of that," said the priest, severely, perhaps by way of indemnifying himself for the passing sentiment of kindness which had moved him. Colin's face grew crimson at these words. The idea flashed upon himself for the first time, and filled him with shame and confusion; but the young man had so far attained that perfection of good breeding which is only developed by contact with men, that the reproof, which was just, did not irritate him—a fact which once more made the clergyman waver in his opinion.

"It is very true," said Colin confused, yet impulsive; "though I am ashamed to say I never thought of it before. We have all been so much occupied with poor Arthur. But what you say is perfectly just, and I am obliged to you for the suggestion. I shall take rooms in Rome to-night."

Upon which the two parted with more amity than could have been expected: for Colin's clerical judge was pleased to have his advice taken so readily, as was natural, and began to incline towards the opinion that a young man who did not resent the imputation of having failed in a point which "any gentleman would have thought of," but confessed without hesitation that it had not occurred to him, could be nothing less than a gentleman. Notwithstanding, the first step taken by this sensible and experienced man was to write a letter by that day's post to Mr. Meredith of Maltby, informing him of the application Colin had just made. He knew nothing against the young man, the reverend gentleman was good enough to say, —he was very young and well-looking, and had a good expression, and might be an unexceptionable connection; but still, without her father's consent, Mr. Meredith might rest assured *he* would take no steps in the business. When he had written this letter, the clergyman summoned his wife and took the trouble of going out to Frascati to see Alice, which he would not have done, had he not been a just and kind man: while at the same time his heart was relenting to Colin, whom the clerical couple met in the street, and who took off his hat when he encountered them, without the least shadow of resentment. It is so long since all this happened that the name of the clergyman thus temporarily occupying the place of the chaplain at Rome has escaped recollection, and Colin's historian has no desire to coin names or confuse identities. The gentleman in question was, it is supposed, an English rector taking his holiday. He went out to Frascati, like an honorable and just person as he was, to see what the solitary girl was about thus left to the chances of the world, and found Alice in the great *salone* in her black dress, under charge of Sora Antonia, who sat with her white handkerchief on her ample shoulders, twirling her spindle, and spinning along with her thread many a tale of checkered human existence for the amusement of her charge; who, however, for the first time in her life, had begun to be unconscious of what was said to her and to spend her days in strains of reverie all unusual to Alice,—mingled dreams and intentions, dim pictures of the life that was to be, and purposes which were to be carried out therein. Sora Antonia's stories, which required no answer, were very congenial to Alice's state of mind; and now and then a word from the narrative fell into and gave a new direction to her thoughts. From all this she woke up with a little start when the English visitors entered, and it was with difficulty she restrained the tears which came in a choking flood when she recognized the clergyman. He had seen Arthur repeatedly during his illness and had given him the sacrament, and laid him in his grave, and all the associations connected with him were too much for her, although after Arthur's death the good man had forgotten the poor little mourning sister. When she recovered, however, Alice was much more able to cope with her reverend questioner than Colin had been, —perhaps because she was a woman, perhaps because she had more of the ease of society, perhaps because in this matter at least her own feelings were more profound and unmixed than those of her young *fiance*. She composed herself with an effort when he introduced the object of his visit, recognizing the necessity of explanation, and ready to give all that was in her power.

"No; papa does not know," said Alice, "but it is because he has taken no charge of me—he has left me to myself. I should not have minded so much if you had been of our county, for then you would have understood; but you are a clergyman, and Mrs."—

"I am a clergyman's wife," the lady said, kindly; "anything you say will be sacred to me."

"Ah," said Alice, with a little impatient sigh; and she could not help looking at the door, and longing for Colin, who was coming no more, though she did not know that; for the girl, though she was not clever, had a perception within her, such as never would have come to Colin, that, notwithstanding this solemn assurance, the fact that her visitor was a clergyman's wife would not prevent her story from oozing out into the common current of English talk in Rome; but notwithstanding, Alice, whose ideas of her duty to the world were very clear, knew that the story must be told. She went on accordingly very steadily, though with thrills and flushes of color coming and going—and the chances are that Colin's ideal woman, could she have been placed in the same position would not have acquitted herself half so well.

"It will be necessary to tell you everything from the beginning, or you will not understand it," said Alice. "Papa did not do exactly as Arthur thought right in some things, and, though I did not think myself a judge, I—I took Arthur's side a little; and then Mrs. Meredith came to Maltby suddenly with the children. It was a great surprise to us, for we did not know till that moment that papa had married again. I would rather not say anything about Mrs. Meredith," said Alice, showing a little agitation, "but Arthur did dot think she was a person whom I could stay with; and when he had to leave himself, he brought me with him. Indeed, I wanted very much to come. I could not bear that he should go away by himself; and I should have died, had I been left there with papa, and everything so changed. I wrote after we left, but papa would not answer my letter, nor take any notice of us. I am very sorry, but I cannot help it. That is all. I suppose you heard of Mrs. Meredith's letter to Mr. Lauderdale. My aunt is in India; so I could not go to her: and all the rest are dead; that is why I have stayed here."

"It is very sad to think you should be so lonely," said the clergyman, "and it is a very trying position for one so young. Still there are families in Rome that would have received you; and I think, my dear Miss Meredith,—you must not suppose me harsh; it is only your good I am thinking of,—I think you should yourself have communicated with your father."

"I wrote to Aunt Mary," said Alice. "I told her everything. I thought she would be sure to advise me for the best. But papa would not answer the letter I wrote him after we left home, and he refuses to have anything to do with me in Mr. Lauderdale's letter. I do not understand what I can do more."

"But you have not waited to be advised," said the English priest, whose wife had taken the poor little culprit's hand, and was whispering to her, "Compose yourself, my dear," and "We are your friends," and "Mr. —— only means it for your good," with other such scraps of consolation. Alice scarcely needed the first exhortation, having, in a large degree, that steady power of self-control which is one of the most valuable endowments in the world. "You have not waited for your aunt's advice," continued the clergyman. "Indeed, I confess it is very hard to blame you; but still it is a very serious step to take, and one that a young creature like you should not venture upon without the advice of her friends. Mr. Campbell also is very young, and you cannot have known each other very long."

"All the winter," said Alice, with a faint color, for affairs were too serious for ordinary blushing; at least all the spring, ever since we left England. And it has not been common knowing," she added, with a deepening flush. "He and Mr. Lauderdale were like brothers to Arthur,—they nursed him night and day; they nursed him better than I did," said the poor sister, bursting forth into natural tears. "The people we have known all our lives were never so good to us. He said at the very last that they were to take care of me; and they have taken care of me," said Alice, among her sobs, raised for a moment beyond herself by her sense of the chivalrous guardianship which had surrounded her, "as if I had been a queen."

"My dear child, lean upon me," said the lady sitting by; "don't be afraid of us; don't mind crying, it will be a relief to you. Mr. —— only means it for your good; he does not intend to vex you, dear."

"Certainly not, certainly not," said the clergyman, taking a little walk to the window, as men do in perplexity; and then he came back and drew his seat closer, as Alice regained the mastery over herself. "My

dear young lady, have confidence in me. Am I to understand that it is from gratitude you have made up your mind to accept Mr. Campbell? Don't hesitate. I beg of you to let me know the truth."

The downcast face of Alice grew crimson suddenly to the hair; and then she lifted her eyes, not to the man who was questioning her, but to the woman who sat beside her. Those eyes were full of indignant complaint and appeal. "Can you, a woman, stand by and see the heart of another woman searched for its secret?" That was the utterance of Alice's look; and she made no further answer, but turned her head partly away, with an offended pride which sat strangely and yet not unbecomingly upon her. The change was so marked that the reverend questioner got up from his chair again almost as confused as Alice, and his wife, instinctively replying to the appeal made to her, took the matter into her own hands.

"If you will wait for me below, George, I will join you by and by," said this good woman. "Men must not spy into women's secrets." And "I have daughters of my own," she added softly in Alice's ear. Let us thank Heaven that, though the number of those be few who are able or disposed to do great things for their fellows, the number is many who are ready to respond to the calls for sympathy at the moment, and own the universal kindred. It was not an everlasting friendship that these two English women, left alone in the bare Italian chamber, formed for each other. The one who was a mother did not receive the orphan permanently into her breast, neither did the girl find a parent in her new friend. Yet for the moment nature found relief for itself; they were mother and child, though strangers to each other. The elder woman heard with tears and sympathy and comprehension the other's interrupted tale, and gave her the kiss which in its way was more precious than a lover's. "You have done nothing wrong, my poor child," the pitying woman said, affording an absolution more valuable than any priest's to the girl's female soul; and as she spoke, there passed momentarily through the mind of the visitor a rapid, troubled enumeration of the rooms in her "apartment," which involved the possibility of carrying this friendless creature home with her. But that idea was found impracticable almost as soon as conceived. "I wish I could take you home with me, my dear," the good woman said, with a sigh; "but our rooms are so small; but I will talk it all over with Mr. ——, and see what can be done; and I should like to know more of Mr. Campbell after all you tell me; he must be a very superior young man. You may be sure we shall be your friends, *both your friends*, whatever happens. I should just like to say a word to the woman of the house, and tell her to take good care of you, my dear, before I go."

"Sora Antonia is very kind," said Alice.

"Yes, my dear, I am sure of it; still she will be all the more attentive when she sees you have friends to take care of you," said the experienced woman, which was all the more kind on her part as her Italian was very limited, and a personal encounter of this description was one which she would have shrunk from in ordinary circumstances. But when she joined her husband, it was with a glow of warmth and kindness about her heart, and a consciousness of having comforted the friendless. "If it ever could be right to do such a thing, I almost think it would be in such a case as this," she said, with a woman's natural leaning to the romantic side; but the clergyman only shook his head. "We must wait, at all events, for an answer from Mr. Meredith," he said; and the fortnight which ensued was not a cheerful one for Alice.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THERE can be no doubt that the clergyman was right in suggesting that Colin should leave Frascati, and that the strange little household which had kept together since Arthur's death, under the supervision of Sora Antonia, was in its innocence in utter contradiction of all decorum and the usages of society. It was true besides that Alice had begun to be uneasy upon this very point, and to feel herself in a false position; nevertheless, when Lauderdale returned alone with a note from Colin, and informed her that they had found rooms in Rome, and were to leave her with Sora Antonia until the arrangements were made for the marriage, it is inconceivable how blank and flat the evening felt to Alice without her two knights. As she sat over her needlework, her sorrow came more frequently home to her than it had ever done before,—her sorrow, her friendlessness,

and the vague dread that this great happiness, which had come in tears, and which even now could scarcely be separated from the grief which accompanied it, might again fly away from her like a passing angel. Sora Antonia was indifferent company under these circumstances; she was very kind, but it was not in nature that an elderly peasant woman could watch the changing expressions of a girl's face, and forestall her tears, and beguile her weariness like the two chivalrous men who had devoted themselves to her amusement and occupation. Now that this rare morsel of time, during which she had been tended "like a queen," was over, it seemed impossible to Alice that it could ever be again. She who was not clever, who was nothing but Arthur's sister, how could she ever expect again to be watched over and served like an enchanted princess? Though, indeed, if she were Colin's wife—! but since Colin's departure and the visit of the clergyman, that possibility seemed to grow dimmer and dimmer,—she could not tell why. She believed in it when her lover came to see her, which was often enough; but when he was absent, doubt returned, and the bright prospect glided away, growing more and more dim and distant. She had never indulged in imagination, to speak of, before, and the few dreams that had possessed her heart had been dreams of Arthur's recovery,—fantastic, hopeless visions of those wondrous doctors and impossible medicines sometimes to be met with in books. But now, when her own position began to occupy her, and she found herself standing between hopes and fears, with such a sweet world of tenderness and consolation on one side, and so unlovely a prospect on the other, the dormant fancy woke up, and made wild work with Alice. Even in the face of her stepmother's refusal to have anything to do with her, the spectre of Mrs. Meredith coming to take her home was the nightmare of the poor girl's existence. This was what she made by the clergyman's attention to the proprieties of the situation; but there was at least the comfort of thinking that in respect to decorum all was now perfectly right.

As for Colin, he, it must be confessed, bore the separation better; for he was not at all afraid of Mrs. Meredith, and he had a great many things to see and do, and when he paid his betrothed a visit, it was sweet to see the flush of unmistakable joy in her face, and to feel that so fair a creature sat thinking of him in the silence, referring everything to him, ready to crown him with all the hopes and blossoms of her youth. And then, but for her sake, Colin, to tell the truth, was in no such hurry to be married as his clerical censor supposed. The weeks that might have to elapse before that event could be concluded were not nearly so irksome to him as they ought to have been; and, even though he began to get irritated at the ambiguous responses of the clergyman, he was not impatient of the delay itself, but found the days very interesting, and, on the whole, enjoyed himself; which, to be sure, may give some people an unfavorable impression of Colin's heart, and want of sympathy with the emotions of her he looked upon as his bride. At the same time, it is but just to say that he was not aware of these emotions,—for Alice said nothing about her fears; and his love for her, which was genuine enough in its way, was not of the nature of that love which divines everything, and reads the eye and the heart with infallible perception. Such love as he had to give her was enough for Alice, who had known no better; but Colin himself was sensible by turns of the absence of the higher element in it,—a sense which sometimes made him vexed with himself, and sometimes with the world and his fate, in all of which a vague want, a something vanished, struck him dimly but painfully whenever he permitted himself to think. But this impression, which came only now and then, and which at all times was vague and unexpressed in words, was the only thing which disturbed Colin's tranquillity at the present moment. He did not suffer, like Alice, from fears that his dawning happiness was too great, and could never come true; for, though he had fully accepted his position, and even with the facility of youth had found pleasure in it, and found himself growing fonder every day of the sweet and tranquil creature to whom he became day by day more completely all in all, this kind of calm, domestic love was unimpassioned, and not subject to the hopes and fears, the despairs and exultations, of more spontaneous and enthusiastic devotion. So, to tell the truth, he endured the separation with philosophy, and roamed about all day long with many a thought in his mind, through that town which is of all towns in the world most

full of memories, most exciting, and most sorrowful. Colin, being Scotch, was not classical to speak of, and the Cæsars had but a limited interest for him; but if the tutelary deities were worn out and faded, the shrine to which pilgrims had come for so many ages was musical with all the echoes of history, and affecting beyond description by many an individual tone of human interest. And in Papal Rome the young priest had an interest altogether different from that of a polemical Protestant or a reverential High Churchman. Colin was a man of his age, tolerant and indulgent to other people's opinions, and apt to follow out his own special study without pausing to consider whether the people among whom he pursued it were without spot or blemish in matters of doctrine. The two friends spent a great deal of time in the churches; not at the high mass, or sweet-voiced vespers, where irreverent crowds assembled, as in a concert room, to hear Mustapha sing, but in out-of-the-way chapels, where there were no signs of *festa;* in the Pantheon, in churches where there were no great pictures nor celebrated images, but where the common people went and came unconscious of any spectators; and many and strange were the discussions held by the two Scotchmen over the devotions they witnessed,—devotions ignorant enough, no doubt, but real, and full of personal meaning. It was Rome without her glorious apparel, without her grandeur and melodies,—Rome in very poor vestments, not always clean, singing out of tune, and regarding with eyes of intensest supplication such poor daubs of saints and weak-eyed Madonnas as would have found no place in the meanest exhibition anywhere in the world. Strangely enough, this was the aspect in which she had most interest for the two friends.

"It would be awfu' curious to hear the real thoughts these honest folk have in their minds," said Lauderdale. "I'm no much of the idolatry way of thinking mysel'. It may come a wee that way in respect to Mary. The rest of them are little more than friends at court so far as I can see, and it's no an unnatural feeling. If you take the view that a' natural feelings are like to be wrong to start with, that settles the question; but if on the other hand"—

"I don't believe in idolatry under any circumstances," said Colin, hotly; "nobody worships a bad picture. It is the something represented by it never to be fully expressed, and of which, indeed, a bad picture is almost more touching than a good one"—

"Keep quiet, callant, and let other folk have a chance to speak," said Lauderdale; "I'm saying there's an awfu' deal of reasonableness in Nature if you take her in the right way. I'm far from being above that feeling mysel'. No that I have ony acquaintance with St. Cosmo and St. Damian and the rest; but I wouldna say if there was ony rational way of getting at the ear of one of them that's gone—even if it was Arthur, poor callant—that I wouldna be awfu' tempted to bid him mind upon me when he was near the Presence Cha'amer. I'm no saying he had much wisdom to speak of, or was more enlightened than mysel'; and there's no distinct evidence that at this moment he's nearer God than I am; but I tell you, callant, Nature's strong, and if I kent ony way of communication, there's nae philosophy in the world would keep me from asking, if he was nigh the palace gates and could see Him that sits upon the throne, that he should mind upon me."

"You may be sure he does it without asking," said Colin,—and then, after a moment's pause, "Your illustration comes too close for criticism; but I know what you mean. I understand the feeling too; but then the saints as they flourish in Rome have nothing to do with Scotland," said the young man. "It would be something to get the people to have a little respect for the saints; but as to saying their prayers to them, there is little danger of that."

"The callant's crazy about Scotland," said Lauderdale; "a man that heard you and kent no better might think ye were the king of Scotland in disguise, with a scheme of church reform in your hand. If you're ever a minister, you'll be in hot water before you're well placed. But, Colin, it's an awfu' descent from all your grand thoughts. You'll have to fight with the presbytery about organs and suchlike rubbish,—and when you're to stand, and when you're to sit; that's what ambitious callants come to in our kirk. You were like enough for such a fate at any time, but you're certain of it now with your English wife."

"Well," said Colin, "it is no worse than the fight about candles and surplices in Eng-

land; better, indeed, for it means something; and if I fight on that point, at least, I'll fight at the same time for better things."

"It's aye best no to fight at all," said the philosopher, "though that's no a doctrine palatable to human nature so far as I have ever seen. But it's aye awfu' easy talking; you're no ready for your profession yet; and how you are ever to be ready, and you a married man"—

"Stuff!" said Colin; "most men are married; but I don't see that that fact hinders the business of the world. I don't mean to spend all my time with my wife."

"No," said Lauderdale with a momentary touch of deeper seriousness, and he paused and cast a side glance at his companion, as if longing to say something; but it happened at that moment, either by chance or intention, that Colin turned the full glow of his brown eyes upon his friend's face, looking at him with that bright but blank smile which he had seen before, and which imposed silence more absolutely than any prohibition. "No," said Lauderdale, slowly changing his tone; "I'll no say it was that I was thinking of. The generality of callants studying for the kirk in our country are no in your position. I'm no clear in my own mind how it's to come to pass,—for a young man that's the head of a family has a different class of subjects to occupy his mind; and as for the Balliol scholarship"—said the philosopher, regretfully; "but that's no what I'm meaning. You'll have to provide for your own house, callant, before you think of the kirk."

"Yes, I have thought of all that," said Colin. "I think Alice will get on with my mother. She must stay there, you know, and I will go down as often as I can during the winter. What do you mean by making no answer? Do you think she will not like Ramore? My mother is fit company for a queen," said the young man with momentary irritation; for, indeed, he was a little doubtful in his own mind how this plan would work.

"I've little acquaintance with queens," said Lauderdale; "but I'm thinking history would tell different tales if the half of them were fit to be let within the door where the mistress was. That's no the question. It's clear to me that your wife will rather have you than your mother, which is according to nature, though you and me may be of a different opinion. If you listen to me, Colin, you'll think a' that over again. It's an awfu' serious question. I'm no saying a word against the kirk; whatever fools may say, it's a grand profession; there's nae profession so grand that I ken of; but a man shouldna enter with burdens on his back and chains on his limbs. You'll have to make your choice between love and it, Colin; and since in the first place you've made choice of love"—

"Stuff!" said Colin, but it was not said with his usual lightness of tone, and he turned upon his friend with a subdued exasperation which meant more than it expressed. "Why do you speak to me of love and—nonsense?" cried Colin. "What choice is there?" and then he recollected himself, and grew red and angry. "My love has Providence itself for a second," he said. "If it were mere fancy, you might speak; but as for giving up my profession, nothing shall induce me to do that. Alice is not like a fanciful fool to hamper and constrain me. She will stay with my mother. Two years more will complete my studies, and then"—here Colin paused of himself, and did not well know what to say; for, indeed, it was then chiefly that the uttermost uncertainty commenced.

"And then"—said Lauderdale, meditatively. "It's an awfu' serious question. It's ill to say what may happen then. What I'm saying is no pleasure to me. I've put mair hope on your head than any man's justified in putting on another man. Ye were the ransom of my soul, callant," said the philosopher, with momentary emotion. "It was you that was to *be*,—nothing but talk will ever come out of a man like me; and it's an awfu' consolation to contemplate a soul that means to live. But there's more ways of living—ay, and of serving God and Scotland—than in the kirk. No man in the world can fight altogether in the face of circumstance. I would think it a' well over again, if I were you."

"No more," said Colin, with all the more impatience that he felt the truth of what his friend was saying. "No more; I am not to be moved on that subject. No, no, it is too much; I cannot give up my profession," he said, half under his breath, to himself; and, perhaps, at the bottom of his soul, a momentary grudge, a momentary pang, arose with-

in him at the thought of the woman who could accept such a sacrifice without even knowing it, or feeling how great it was. Such, alas, was not the woman of Colin's dreams; yet so inconsistent was the young man in his youth that, ten minutes after, when the two walked past the Colosseum on their way to the railway, being bound to Frascati (for this was before the days when the vulgar highway of commerce had entered within the walls of Rome), a certain wavering smile on his lip, a certain color on his cheeks, betrayed as plainly that he was bound on a lover's errand as if it had been said in words. Lauderdale, whose youthful days were past, and who was at all times more a man of one idea, more absolute and fixed in his affections, than Colin, could understand him less on this point than on any other; but he saw how it was, though he did not attempt to explain how it could be, and the two friends grew silent, one of them delivered by sheer force of youthfulness and natural vigor from the anxieties that clouded the other. As they approached the gate, a carriage, which had been stopped there by the watchful ministers of the Dogana, made a sudden start, and dashed past them. It was gone in a moment, flashing on in the sunshine at the utmost speed which a reckless Italian coachman could get out of horses which did not belong to him; but in that instant, both the bystanders started, and came to a sudden pause in their walk. "Did you hear anything?" said Colin. "What was it?" and the young man turned round, and made a few rapid strides after the carriage; but then Colin stopped short, with an uneasy laugh at himself. "Absurd," he said; "all English voices sound something alike," which was an unlover-like remark. And then he turned to his friend, who looked almost as much excited as himself.

"I suppose that's it," said Lauderdale; but he was less easily satisfied than Colin. "I cannot see how it could be her," he said, slowly; "but— Yon's an awfu' speed if there's no reason for it. I'm terrible tempted to jump into that machine there, and follow," the philosopher added, with a stride towards a crazy little one-horse carriage which was waiting empty at the gate.

"It is I who should do that," said Colin; and then he laughed, shaking off his fears. "It is altogether impossible and absurd," the young man said. "Nonsense! there are scores of English girls who have voices sufficiently like hers to startle one. I have thought it was she half a dozen times since I came to Rome. Come along, or we shall lose the train. Nothing could possibly bring her into Rome without our knowledge; and nothing, I hope," said the young lover, who was in little doubt on that branch of the subject, "could make her pass by *me*."

"Except her father," said Lauderdale, to which Colin only replied by an impatient exclamation as they went on to the train. But though it was only a momentary sound, the tone of a voice, that had startled them, it was with extreme impatience and an uneasiness which they tried to hide from each other that they made their way to Frascati. To be sure, Colin amused himself for a little by the thought of a pretty speech with which he could flatter and flutter his gentle *fiancée*, telling her her voice was in the air, and he heard it everywhere; and then he burst forth into "Airy tongues that syllable men's names," to the consternation of Lauderdale. "But then she did not syllable any name," he added, laughing, "which is proof positive that it can have been nothing." His laugh and voice were, however, full of disturbance, and betrayed to Lauderdale that the suggestion he had made began to work. The two mounted the hill to Frascati from the station with a swiftness and silence natural to two Scotchmen at such a moment, leaving everything in the shape of carriage behind them. When they reached the Palazzo Savvelli, Colin cleared the long staircase at a bound for anything his companion saw who followed him more slowly, more and more certainly prescient of something having happened. When Lauderdale reached the *salone*, he found nobody there save Sora Antonia, with her apron at her eyes, and Colin, sunk into Arthur's chair, reading a letter which he held in both his hands. Colin's face was crimson, his hands trembling with excitement and passion. The next moment he had started to his feet and was ready for action. "Read it, Lauderdale," he said, with a choking voice; "you may read it; it has all come true; and in the mean time I'm off to get a vettura," said the young man, rushing to the door. Before his friend could say a word, Colin was gone, tearing frantically down the stairs which he had

come up like lightning; and in this bewildering moment, after the thunderbolt had fallen, with Sora Antonia's voice ringing in his ear as loudly and scarce more intelligibly than the rain which accompanies a storm, Lauderdale picked up poor Alice's letter, which was blotted with tears.

"Papa has come to fetch me," wrote Alice. "Oh, Colin, my heart is broken! He says we are to go instantly, without a moment's delay; and he would not let me write even this if he knew. Oh, Colin, after all your goodness and kindness and love that I was not worthy of!—oh, why did anybody ever interfere? I do not know what I am writing, and I am sure you will never be able to read it. Never so long as I live shall I think one thought of anybody but you; but papa would not let me speak to you,—would not wait to see you, though I told him you were coming. Oh, Colin, good-by, and do not think it is I—and tell Mr. Lauderdale I shall never forget his kindness. I would rather, far rather, die than go away. Always, always, whatever any one may say, your own poor Alice, who is not half nor quarter good enough for you."

This was the hurried utterance of her disappointment and despair which Alice had left behind her ere she was forced away; but Sora Antonia held another document of a more formal description, which she delivered to Lauderdale with a long preface, of which he did not understand a word. He opened it carelessly; for, the fact being apparent, Lauderdale, who had no hand in the business on his own account, was sufficiently indifferent to any compliments which the father of Alice might have to pay to himself.

"Mr. Meredith regrets to have the sentiments of gratitude with which he was prepared to meet Mr. Lauderdale, on account of services rendered to his son, turned into contempt and indignation by the base attempt on the part of Mr. Lauderdale's companion to ensnare the affections of his daughter. Having no doubt whatever that when removed from the personal coercion in which she has been held, Miss Meredith will see the base character of the connection which it has been attempted to force upon her, Mr. Meredith will, in consideration of the services above mentioned, take no legal steps for the exposure of the conspiracy which he has fortunately found out in time to defeat its nefarious object, but begs that it may be fully understood that his leniency is only to be purchased by an utter abstinence from any attempt to disturb Miss Meredith, or bring forward the ridiculous pretensions of which she is too young to see the utterly interested and mercenary character."

A man does not generally preserve his composure unabated after reading such an epistle, and Lauderdale was no more capable than other men of dissembling his indignation. His face flushed with a dark glow, more burning and violent than anything that had disturbed his blood for years; and it was as well for the character of the grave and sober-minded Scotsman that nobody but Sora Antonia was present to listen to the first exclamation that rose to his lips. Sora Antonia herself was in a state of natural excitement, pouring forth her account of all that happened with tears and maledictions, which were only stopped by Colin's shout from the bottom of the staircase for his friend. The impatient youth came rushing up-stairs when he found no immediate response, and swept the older man with him like a whirlwind. "Another time, another time!" he cried to Sora Antonia. "I must go first and bring the signorina back;" and Colin picked up both the letters, and rushed down, driving Lauderdale before him to the carriage which he had already hastened to the door; and they were driving off again, whirling down hill towards the Campagna, before either had recovered the first shock of this unlooked-for change in all their plans. Then it was Lauderdale who was the first to speak.

"You are going to bring the signorina back," he said, with a long breath. "It's a fool's errand, but I'll no say but I'll go with you. Colin, it's happened as was only natural. The father has got better, as I said he would. I'm no blaming the father"—

"Not after *this?*" said Colin, who had just read in a blaze of indignation Mr. Meredith's letter.

"Hout," said the philosopher, "certainly not after that;" and he took it out of Colin's hand and folded it up and tore it into a dozen pieces. "The man kens nothing of me. Callant," said Lauderdale, warming suddenly, "there is but one person to be considered in this business. You and me can fend for ourselves. Pain and sorrow cannot but come on her as things are, but nothing is to be done or said that can aggravate them, or give her more to bear. You're no heeding

what I say. Where are you going now, if a man might ask?"

"I am going to claim my bride," said Colin, shortly. "Do you imagine I am likely to abandon her now?"

"Colin," said his friend, anxiously, "you'll no get her. I'm no forbidding you to try, but I warn you not to hope. She's in the hands of her natural guardian, and at this moment there's nae power on earth that would induce him to give her to you. He's to be blamed for ill speaking, but I'm not clear that he's to be blamed for this."

"I wish you would not talk," said Colin, roughly, and opened Alice's little letter again, and read it and put it to his lips. If he had never been impassioned before, he was so now; and so they went on, dashing across the long, level Campagna roads, where there was nothing to break the sunshine but here and there a nameless pile of ruins.

The sunshine began to fall low and level on the plain before they reached the gates. "One thing at least is certain: he cannot take her out of Rome to-night," said Colin. It was almost the only word that was spoken between them until they began their doubtful progress from one hotel to another, through the noisy, resounding streets.

CHAPTER XL.

"Now we have found them, let me face them by myself," said Colin, to whom the interval of silence and consideration had been of use. They were both waiting in the hall of one of the hotels facing towards the Piazza del Popolo, to which they had at last tracked Mr. Meredith, and Lauderdale acquiesced silently in Colin's decision. The young man had already sent up his card, with a request that he might see not Alice, but her father. After a considerable time, the servant who had taken it returned with an abrupt message that Mr. Meredith was engaged. When he had sent up a second time, explaining that his business was urgent, but with the same effect, Colin accompanied his third message with a note, and went with his messenger to the door of the room in which his adversary was. There could be no doubt of the commotion produced within by this third application. Colin could hear some one pacing about the room with disturbed steps, and the sound of a controversy going on, which, though he was too far off to hear anything that was said, still reached him vaguely in sound at least. When he had waited for about five minutes, the clergyman, whom he had not in the least thought of or expected to see, made his appearance cautiously at the door. He did not attempt to admit the young man, but came up to him on tiptoe, and took him persuasively, almost caressingly, by the arm. "My good friend, my excellent young friend," said the puzzled priest, with a mixture of compunction and expostulation which in other circumstances would have amused Colin, "let us have a little conversation. I am sure you are much too generous and considerate to add to the distress of—of"— But here the good man recollected just in time that he had pledged himself not to speak of Alice, and made a sudden pause. "There, in that room," he went on, changing his tone, and assuming a little solemnity, "is a sorrowful father, mourning for his only son, and driven almost out of his senses by illness and weakness, and a sense of the shameful way in which his daughter has been neglected,—not his fault, my dear Mr. Campbell. You cannot have the heart to increase his sufferings by claims, however well founded, which have been formed at a time"—

"Stop," said Colin, "it is not my fault if he has not done his duty to his children; I have no right to bear the penalty. He has cast the vilest imputations upon me"—

"Hush, hush, I beg of you," said the clergyman, "my excellent young friend"—

Colin laughed in spite of himself. "If I am your excellent friend," he said, "why do you not procure me admission to tell my own story? Why should the sight of me distress your sorrowing father? I am not an ogre, nor an enemy, but his son's friend; and up to this day, I need not remind you," said the young man, with a rising color, "the only protector, along with my friend Lauderdale, whom his daughter has had. I do not say that he may not have natural objections to give her to me, a poor man," said Colin, with natural pride; "but, at all events, he has no reason to hurry her away by stealth, as if I had not a right to be told why our engagement is interrupted so summarily. I will do nothing to distress Alice," the young man went on, involuntarily lingering by the

door, which was not entirely closed; "but I protest against being treated like a villain or an adventurer"—

"Hush, hush, hush!" cried the unlucky peacemaker, putting out his hand to close the unfastened door; but before he could do so, Mr. Meredith appeared on the threshold, flushed and furious. "What are you else, sir, I should like to know," cried the angry British father, "to drag an unprotected girl into such an entanglement without even a pretence of consulting her friends, to take advantage of a death-bed for your detestable fortune-hunting schemes? Don't answer me, sir! Have you a penny of your own? have you anything to live on? That's the question. If it was not for other considerations, I'd indict you. I'd charge you with conspiracy; and even now, if you come here to disturb my poor girl,— But, I promise you, you shall see her no more," the angry man continued. "Go, sir, and let me hear no more of you. She has a protector now."

Colin stood a moment without speaking after Mr. Meredith had disappeared, closing the door violently after him.

"I have not come to distress Alice," said the young man. He had to repeat it to himself to keep down the hot blood that was burning in his veins; and as for the unfortunate clergyman, who was the immediate cause of all this, he kept his position by the door in a state of mind far from enviable, sorry for the young man and ashamed of the old one, and making inarticulate efforts to speak and mediate between them. But the conference did not last very long outside the closed door. Though it did not fortunately occur to Colin that it was the interference of his present companion which had originated this scene, the young man did not feel the insult the less from the deprecatory half-sympathy offered to him. "It is a mistake,—it is a mistake," said the clergyman, "Mr. Meredith will discover his error. I said I thought you were imprudent, and indeed wrong; but I have never suspected you of interested motives,—never since my first interview with the young lady;—but think of her sufferings, my dear young friend; think of her," said the mediator, who was driven to his wits' end. As for Colin, he calmed himself down a little by means of pacing about the corridor,—the common resource of men in trouble.

"Poor Alice," he said, "if I did not think of her, do you think I should have stood quietly to be insulted? But look here,—the abuse of such a man can do no harm to me, but he may kill her. If I could see her, it might do some good. Impossible? Do you suppose I mean to see her clandestinely, or to run away with her, perhaps? I mean," said Colin, with youthful sternness, "that if I were permitted to see her, I might be able to reconcile her a little to what is inevitable. Of course he is her father. I wish her father were a chimney-sweep instead," said Colin; "but it is she I have to think of. Will you try to get me permission to see her?—only for ten minutes, if you like,—in your presence, if that is necessary; but I must say one word to her before she is carried away."

"Yes, yes, it's very natural,—very natural," said the peacemaker; "I will do all I can for you. Be here at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning; the poor dear young lady must have rest after her agitation. Don't be afraid; I am not a man to deceive you; they do not leave till five o'clock for Civita Vecchia. You shall see her; I think I can promise you. I will take the responsibility on myself."

Thus ended Colin's attempt to bring back the signorina, as he said. In the morning, he had reached the hotel long before the hour mentioned, in case of an earlier departure; but everything was quiet there, and the young man hovered about, looking up at the windows, and wondering which might be the one which enclosed his little love, with sentiments more entirely loverlike than he had ever experienced before. But when the hour of his appointment came, and he hurried into the hotel, he was met by the indignant clergyman, who felt his own honor compromised, and was wroth beyond measure. Mr. Meredith had left Rome at dawn of day, certainly not for Civita Vecchia, leaving no message for any one. He had pretended, after hot resistance, to yield to the kind-hearted priest's petition, that the lovers might say farewell to each other, and this was the way he had taken of balking them. It was now the author of the original mischief who felt himself insulted and scorned, and his resentment and indignation were louder than Colin's, whose mind at first lost itself in schemes of following, and vain attempts to ascertain the route the party

had taken. Lauderdale, coming anxious but steady to the scene of action half an hour afterward, found his friend absorbed in this inquiry, and balancing all the chances between the road by Perugia and the road by Orvieto, with the full intention of going off in pursuit. It was then his careful guardian's time to interfere. He led the youth away, and pointed out to him the utter vanity of such an undertaking. Not distance or uncertainty of road, but her father's will, which was likely to be made all the more rigorous by a pursuit, parted Alice from her young protector and bridegroom; and if he followed her to the end of the world, this obstacle would still remain as unremovable as ever. Though he was hot-headed and young, and moved by excitement and indignation and pity to a height of passion which his love for Alice by itself would never have produced, Colin still could not help being reasonable, and he saw the truth of what was said to him. At the same time, it was not natural that the shock which was so great and sudden should be got over in a moment. Colin felt himself insulted and outraged, in the first place; and in another point of view he was equally mortified,—mortified even by the relief which he knew would be felt by all his friends when the sudden end of his unwelcome project was made known to them. The Ramore household had given a kind of passive acquiescence to what seemed inevitable; but Colin was aware they would all be very glad at home when the failure was known,—and it was a failure, howsoever the tale might be told. Thus the original disappointment was aggravated by stings of apprehended ridicule and jocular sympathy; for to no living soul, not even to his mother, would Colin have confessed how great a share in his original decision Alice's helpless and friendless position had, nor the sense of loss and bondage with which he had often in his secret heart regarded the premature and imprudent marriage which he had lived to hear stigmatized as the scheme of a fortune-hunter. It was thus that the very generosity of his intentions gave an additional sting at once to the insult and the sympathy. After a day or two, his thoughts of Alice as the first person to be considered, and deep sense of the terrible calamity it was to her, yielded a little to those thoughts of himself and all the humiliating accompaniments of this change in his intentions. During this period his temper became, even by Lauderdale, unbearable; and he threw aside everything he was doing, and took to silence and solitary rambles, in utter disgust with the short-sightedness and injustice of the world. But after that unhappy interval, it has to be confessed that the skies suddenly cleared for Colin. The first symptom of revival that happened to him came to pass on a starry lovely May night, when he plunged into the darkness of the lonely quarter about the Colosseum alone, and in a state of mind to which an encounter with the robbers supposed to haunt these silent places would have been highly beneficial. But it chanced that Colin raised his moody eyes to the sky, suddenly and without any premeditation, and saw the moon struggling up through a maze of soft white clouds, parting them with her hands as they threw themselves into baffling, airy masses always in her way; and suddenly, without a moment of preface, a face—the face—the image of the veiled woman, who was not Alice, and to whom he had bidden farewell, gleamed out once more through the clouds, and looked Colin in the eyes, thrilling him through and through with a guilty astonishment. The moment after was the hardest of all Colin's struggle; and he rushed home after it tingling all over with self-contempt and burning indignation, and plunged into a torrent of talk when he found his friend, by way of forgetting himself, which struck Lauderdale with the utmost surprise. But next day Colin felt himself somehow comforted without knowing how; and then he took to thinking of his life and work, which now, even for the sake of Alice, if nothing else, he must pursue with determined energy; and then it seemed to him as if every moment was lost that kept him away from home. Was it for Alice? Was it that he might offer her again the perfected mind and settled existence to which his labors were to lead him? He said so to himself as he made his plans; but yet unawares a vision of deeper eyes came gleaming upon him out of the clouds. And it was with the half-conscious thrill of another existence, a feeling as of new and sweeter air in the sails, and a widening ocean under the keel, that Colin rose up after all these varying changes of sentiment were over, and set his face to the north once more.

"It's awfu' strange to think it's the last time," said Lauderdale, as they stood together

on the Pincian Hill, and watched the glowing colors of the Roman sunset. "It's little likely that you and me will ever see St. Peter yonder start up black into the sun like hat another time in our lives. It's grander han a' their illuminations, though it's more like another kind of spirit than an angel. And this is Rome! I dinna seem ever to have realized the thought before. It's awfu' living and lifelike, callant, but it's the graves we'll mind it by. I'm no meaning kings and Cæsars. I'm meaning them that come and never return. Testaccio's hidden out of sight, and the cypress trees," said the philosopher; "but there's mony an eye that will never lose sight of them even at the other end of the world. I might have been going my ways with an awfu' different heart, if it hadna been for the mercy of God."

"Then you thought I would die?" said Colin, to whom, in the stir of his young life, the words were solemn and strange to say; "and God is merciful; yet Meredith is lying yonder, though not me."

"Ay," said Lauderdale, and then there was a long pause. "I'm no offering ony explanation," said the philosopher. "It's a question between a man and his Maker,—spirit to spirit. It's an awfu' mystery to us but it maun be made clear and satisfying to them that go away. For me, I'll praise God," he said, abruptly, with a harsh ring in his voice; and Colin knew for the first time thoroughly that his faithful guardian had thought nothing better than to bring him here to die. They went into the church on the hill, where the nuns were singing their sweet vespers as they descended for the last time through the dusky avenues, listening as they went to the bells ringing the Ave Maria over all the crowded town; and there came upon Colin and his friend in different degrees that compunction of happiness which is the soul of thanksgiving. Others,—how many!—have stood speechless in dumb submission on that same spot and found no thanks to say; and it was thus that Colin, after all the events that made these four months so important in his life, entered upon a new period of his history, and took his farewell of Rome.

PART XIV. — CHAPTER XL.

"It's hard to ken what to say," said the Mistress, going to the window for the hundredth time, and looking out wistfully upon the sky which shone dazzling over the Holy Loch with the excessive pathetic brightness of exceptional sunshine. "I canna make out for my part if he's broken-hearted or no, and a word wrong just at a moment like this would be hard on the callant. It's a wonderful mercy it's such a bonnie day. That's aye a blessing both to the body and the mind."

"Well, it's you that Colin takes after," said the farmer of Ramore, with an undertone of dissatisfaction; "so there's no saying but what the weather may count for something. I've lost understanding for my part of a lad that gangs abroad for his health, and gets himself engaged to be married. In my days, when marriage came into a man's head, he went through with it, and there was an end of the subject. For my part, I dinna pretend to understand your newfangled ways."

"Eh, Colin, dinna be so unfeeling," said the Mistress, roused to remonstrance. "You were like to gang out of your mind about the marriage when you thought it was to be; and now you're ready to sneer at the poor laddie, as if he could help it. It's hard when his ain friends turn against him after the ingratitude he's met wi', and the disappointment he's had to bear."

"You may trust a woman for uphaudin' her son in such like nonsense," said big Colin. "The only man o' sense among them that I can see was yon Mr. Meredith that took the lassie away. What the deevil had Colin to do with a wife, and him no a penny in his pouch? But in the meantime yonder's the steamboat, and I'm gaun down to meet them. If I were you I would stop still here. You're no that strong," said the farmer, looking upon his wife with a certain secret tenderness. "I would stop still at hame if I were you. It's aye the best welcome for a callant to see his mother at her ain door."

With which big Colin of Ramore strode downwards to the beach, where his sons were launching their own boat to meet the little steamer by which Colin was coming home. His wife looked after him with mingled feelings as he went down the brae. He had been a little hard upon Colin for these six months past, and had directed many a covert sarcasm at the young man who had gone so far out of the ordinary course as to seek health in Italy. The farmer did not believe in any son of his needing such an expedient; and, in proportion as it seemed unnecessary to his own vigorous strength, and ignorance of weakness, he took opportunity for jeers and jests which were to the mother's keen ears much less good-natured than they seemed to be. And then he had been very angry on the receipt of Colin's letter announcing his intended marriage, and it was with difficulty Mrs. Campbell had prevented her husband from sending in return such an answer as might have banished Colin for ever from his father's house. Now all these clouds had blown past, and no harm had come of them, and he was coming home as of old. His brothers were launching the boat on the beach, and his father had gone down to meet the stranger. The Mistress stood at her door, restraining her eagerness and anxiety as best she could, and obeying her husband's suggestion, as women do so often, by way of propitiating him, and bespeaking tenderness and forbearance for her boy. For indeed the old times had passed away, with all their natural family gladness, and union clouded by no sense of difference. Now it was a man of independent thoughts, with projects and pursuits of his own differing from theirs, and with a mind no doubt altered and matured by those advantages of travel which the Mistress regarded in her ignorance with a certain awe, who was coming back to Ramore. Colin had made so many changes, while so few had occurred at home; and even a bystander, less anxious than his mother, might have had reason to inquire and wonder how the matured and travelled son would look upon his unprogressive home.

It was now the end of September, though Colin had left Rome in May; but then his Snell Scholarship was intended to give him the advantage of travel, and specially that peculiar advantage of attendance at a German University which is so much prized in Scotland. He had accordingly passed the intervening months in a little German town, getting up the language and listening to lectures made doubly misty by imperfect understanding of the tongue. The process left Colin's theological ideas very much where it found them—which is to say, in a state of general vagueness and uncertainty; but then he had always the advantage of being able to say that he had studied at Dickoftenberg. Lauderdale had left his friend after spending, not without satisfaction, his hundred pounds, and was happily re-established in the "honorable situation" which he had quitted on Colin's account; or, if

not in that precise post, at least in a cognate appointment, the nature of which came to Colin's ears afterwards; and the young man was now returning home alone, to spend a little time with his family before he returned to his studies. The Mistress watched him land from the boat, with her heart beating so loudly in her ears that no other sound was audible; and Colin did not lose much time in ascending the brae where she stood awaiting him. "But you should not have left your father," Mrs Campbell said, even in the height of her happiness. "He's awfu' proud to see you home, Colin, my man!" Big Colin, however, was no way displeased in his own person by his son's desertion. He came up leisurely after him, not without a thrill of conscious satisfaction. The farmer was sufficiently disposed to scoff aloud at his son's improved looks, at his beard, and his dress, and all the little particulars which made a visible difference between the present Colin and the awkward country lad of two years ago; but in his heart he made involuntary comparisons, and privately concluded that the minister's son was far from being Colin's equal, and that even the heir and pride of the Duke would have little to boast of in presence of the farmer's son of Ramore. This — though big Colin would not for any earthly inducement have owned the sentiment — made him regard his son's actions and intentions unawares with eyes more lenient and gracious. No contemptible weakness of health or delicacy of appearance appeared in the sunburnt countenance, so unexpectedly garnished by a light-brown, crisp, abundant beard — a beard of which, to tell the truth, Colin himself was rather proud, all the more as it had by rare fortune escaped that intensification of color which is common to men of his complexion. The golden glitter which lighted up the great waves of brown hair over his forehead had not deepened into red on his chin, as it had done in Archie's young but vigorous whiskers. His complexion, though not so ruddy as his brother's, had the tone of perfect health and vigor, untouched by any shade of fatigue or weakness. He was not going to be the "delicate" member of the family, as the farmer had foreboded, with a strange mixture of contempt in his feelings; for, naturally, to be delicate included a certain weakness of mind as well as of body to the healthful dwellers in Ramore.

"You'll find but little to amuse you here after a' your travels," the farmer said. We're aye busy about the beasts, Archie and me. I'll no say it's an elevating study, like yours; but it's awfu' necessary in our occupation. For my part, I'm no above a kind o' pride in my cattle; and there's your mother, she's set her shoulder to the wheel and won a prize."

"Ay, Colin," said the Mistress, hastening to take up her part in the conversation, "it's aye grand to be doing something. And it's no' me but Gowans that's won the prize. She was aye a weel-conditioned creature, that it was a pleasure to have onything to do with; but there's plenty of time to speak about the beasts. You're sure you're weel and strong yourself, Colin, my man? for that's the first thing now we've got you hame."

"There doesna look much amiss with him," said the farmer, with an inarticulate growl. "Your mother's awfu' keen for somebody to pet and play wi'; but there's a time for a' thing; and a callant, even, though he's brought up for a minister, maun find out when he's a man."

"I should hope there was no doubt of that," said Colin. "I'm getting on for two-and-twenty, mother, and strong enough for anything. Thanks to Harry Frankland for a splendid holiday; and now I mean to settle down to work."

Here big Colin again interjected an inarticulate exclamation. "I ken little about your kind of work," said the discontented father; "but, if I were you, when I wanted a bit exercise I would take a hand at the plough, or some-wise-like occupation, instead of picking fools out of canals — or even out of lochs, for that matter," he added, with a subdued thrill of pride. "Sir Thomas is aye awfu' civil when he comes here; and, as for that bonnie little creature that's aye with him, she comes chirping about the place with her fine English, as if she belonged to it. I never can make out what she and your mother have such long cracks about."

"Miss Frankland?" said Colin, with a bright look of interest. The Mistress had been so much startled by this unexpected speech of her husband, that she turned right round upon Colin with an anxious face, eager to know what effect an intimation so sudden might have upon him. For the farmer's wife believed in true love and in first love with all her heart, and had never been able to divest herself of the idea that it was partly pique and disappointment in respect to Miss Matty which had driven her son into so hasty an engagement. "Is she still Miss Frankland?" continued the unsuspicious Colin. "I thought she would have been married by this time. She is a little witch," the young man said with a conscious smile — "but I owe her a great many pleasant

hours. She was always the life of Wodensbourne. Were they here this year?" he asked; and then another thought struck him. "Hollo! it's only September," said Colin; "I ought to ask, Are they here now?"

"Oh, ay, Colin, they're here now," said the Mistress, "and couldna be more your friends if you were one of the family. I'm no clear in my mind that thae two will ever be married. No that I ken of any obstacle — but, so far as I can see, a bright bonny creature like that, aye full of life and spirit, is nae match for the like of him."

"I do not see that," said the young man who once was Matty Frankland's worshipper. "She is very bright, as you say; but he is the more honest of the two. I used to be jealous of Harry Frankland," said Colin, laughing; "he seemed to have everything that was lacking to me; but I have changed my mind since then. One gets to believe in compensations," said the young man; and he shut his hand softly where it rested on the table, as if he felt in it the tools which a dozen Harry Franklands could have made no use of. But this thought was but dimly intelligible to his hearers, to one of whom, at least, the word "jealous" was limited in its meaning; and, viewed in this light, the sentiment just expressed by Colin was hard to understand.

"I'm no fond of what folk call compensations," said the Mistress. "A loss is aye a loss, whatever onybody can say. Siller that's lost may be made up for, but naething more precious. It's aye an awfu' marvel to me that chapter about Job getting other bairns to fill the place o' the first. I would rather have the dead loss and the vacant place," said the tender woman, with tears in her eyes, "than a' your compensations. One can never stand for another — it's awfu' infidelity to think it. If I canna have happiness, I'll be content with sorrow; but you're no to speak of compensations to me."

"No," said Colin, laying his hand caressingly on his mother's; "but I was not speaking of either love or loss. I meant only that for Harry Frankland's advantages over me, I might, perhaps, have a little balance on my side. For example, I picked him out of the canal, as my father says," the young man went on laughing; "but never mind the Franklands; I suppose I shall have to see them, as they are here."

"Weel, Colin, you can please yourself," said his father. "I'm no' a man to court the great, but an English baronet, like Sir Thomas, is aye a creditable acquaintance for a callant like you; and he's aye awfu' civil as I was saying; but the first thing to be sure of is what you mean to do. You have had the play for near a year, and it doesna appear to me that tutorships, and that kind of thing, are the right training for a minister. You'll go back to your studies, and go through with them without more interruptions, if you'll be guided by me."

But at this point Colin paused, and had a good many explanations to give. His heart was set on the Balliol scholarship, which he had once given up for Matty's sake; but now there was another chance for him, which had arisen unexpectedly. This it was which had hastened his return home. As for his father, the farmer yielded with but little demur to this proposal. A clear Scotch head, even when it begins to lose its sense of the ideal, and to become absorbed in "the beasts," seldom deceives itself as to the benefits of education; and big Colin had an intense secret confidence in the powers of his son. Honors at Oxford, in the imagination of the Scotch farmer, were a visionary avenue leading to any impossible altitude. He made a little resistance for appearance' sake, but he was in reality more excited by the idea of the conflict — first, for the scholarship itself; then for all possible prizes and honors to the glory of Scotland and Ramore — than was Colin himself.

"But after a year's play you're no qualified," he said, with a sense of speaking ironically, which was very pleasant to his humor. "A competition's an awfu' business; your rivals that have aye been keeping at it will be better qualified than you."

At which Colin smiled, as his father meant him to smile, and answered, "I am not afraid," more modestly a great deal than the farmer in his heart was answering for him; but then an unexpected antagonist arose.

"I dinna pretend to ken a great deal about Oxford," said the Mistress, whose brow was clouded; "but it's an awfu' put-off of time as far as I can see. I'm no fond of spending the best of life in idle learning. Weel, weel, maybe its no idle learning for them that can spare the time; but for a lad that's no out of the thought of settling for himself and doing his duty to his fellow-creatures — I was reading in a book no that long ago," said Colins mother, "about thae fellowships and things, and of men so misguided as to stay on and live to be poor bachelor bodies, with their Greek and their Latin, and no mortal use in this world. Eh, Colin, laddie, if that was a' that was to come of you!" —

"You're keen to see your son in a pulpit

like the rest of the silly women," said the farmer; "for my part, I'm no that bigoted to the kirk; if he could do better for himsel' "—

But at this juncture the Mistress got up with a severe countenance, laying aside the stocking she was knitting. "Eh, Colin, if you wouldn't get so worldly," cried the anxious mother. "I'm no one that's aye thinking of a callant bettering himself. If he's taken arles in one service, would you have him desert and gang over to another? For me, I would like to see my laddie faithful to his first thoughts. I'm no saying faithful to his Master, for a man may be that though he's no a minister," continued the Mistress; "but I canna bear to see broken threads; be one thing or be another, but dinna melt away and be nothing at a'," the indignant woman concluded abruptly, moving away to set things in order in the room before they all retired for the night. It was the faint, far-off, and impossible idea of her son settling down into one of the Fellowships of which Mrs. Campbell had been reading which moved her to this little outburst. Her authority probably was some disrespectful novel or magazine article, and that was all the idea she had formed in her ignorance of the nurseries of learning. Colin, however, was so far of her mind that he responded at once.

"I don't mean to give up my profession, mother; I only mean to be all the more fit for it," he said. "I should never hesitate if I had to choose between the two."

"Hear him and his fine talk," said the farmer, getting up in his turn with a laugh. "It would be a long time before our minister, honest man, would speak of his profession. Leave him to himself, Jeanie. He kens what he's doing; that's to say, he has an awfu' ambition considering that he's only your son and mine," said big Colin of Ramore; and he went out to take a last look at his beasts with a thrill of a secret pride which he would not for any reward have expressed in words. He was only a humble Westland farmer looking after his beasts, and she was but his true wife, a helpmeet no way above her natural occupations; but there was no telling what the boy might be, though he was only "your son and mine." As for Colin the younger, he went up to his room half an hour later, after the family had made their homely thanksgiving for his return, smiling in himself at the unaccountable contraction of that little chamber, which he had once shared with Archie without finding it too small. Many changes and many thoughts had come and gone since he last lay down under its shelving roof. Miss Matty who had danced away like a will-o'-the-wisp, leaving no trace behind her; and Alice who had won no such devotion, yet whose soft shadow lay upon him still; and then there was the deathbed of Meredith, and his own almost deathbed at Wodensbourne, and all the thoughts that belonged to these. Such influences and imaginations mature a man unawares. While he sat recalling all that had passed since he left this nest of his childhood, the Mistress tapped softly at his door, and came in upon him with wistful eyes. She would have given all she had in the world for the power of reading her son's heart at that moment, and, indeed, there was little in it which Colin would have objected to reveal to his mother. But the two human creatures were constrained to stand apart from each in the bonds of their individual nature,—to question timidly and answer vaguely, and make queries which were all astray from the truth. The Mistress came behind her son and laid one hand on his shoulder, and with the other caressed and smoothed back the waves of brown hair of which she had always been so proud. "Your hair is just as long as ever, Colin," said the admiring mother; "but it's no a' your mother's now," she said with a soft, little sigh. She was standing behind him that her eyes might not disconcert her boy, meaning to woo him into confidence and the opening of his heart.

"I don't know who else cares for it," said Colin; and then he too was glad to respond to the unasked question. "My poor Alice," he said; "if I could but have brought her to you, mother—she would have been a daughter to you."

Mrs. Campbell sighed. "Eh, Colin, I'm awfu' hard-hearted," she said; "I canna believe in ony woman ever taking that place. I'm awfu' bigoted to my ain; but she would have been dearly welcome for my laddie's sake; and I'm real anxious to hear how it a' was. It was but little you said in your letters, and a' this night I've been wanting to have you to mysel', and to hear all that there was to say."

"I don't know what there is to say," said Colin; "I must have written all about it. Her position, of course, made no difference to my feelings," he went on, rather hotly, like a man who in his own consciousness stands somewhat on his defence; "but it made us hasten matters. I thought if I could only have brought her home to you"—

"It was aye you for a kind thought," said

the Mistress; "but she would have had little need of the auld mother when she had the son; and Colin, my man, is it a' ended now?"

"Heaven knows!" said Colin with a little impatience. "I have written to her through her father, and I have written to her by herself, and all that I have had from her is one little letter saying that her father had forbidden all further intercourse between us, and bidding me farewell; but"—

"But," said the Mistress, "it's no of her own will; she's faithful in her heart? And if she's true to you, you'll be true to her? Isna that what you mean?"

"I suppose so," said Colin; and then he made a little pause. "There never was any one so patient and so dutiful," he said. "When poor Arthur died, it was she who forgot herself to think of us. Perhaps even this is not so hard upon her as one thinks."

"Eh, but I was thinking first of my ain, like a heartless woman as I am," said his mother. "I've been thinking it was hard on *you*."

He did not turn round his face to her as she had hoped; but her keen eyes could see the heightened color which tinged even his neck and his forehead. "Yes," said Colin; "but for my part," he added, with a little effort, "it is chiefly Alice I have been thinking of. It may seem vain to say so, but she will have less to occupy her thoughts than I shall have, and — and the time may hang heavier. — You don't like me to go to Oxford, mother?" This question was said with a little jerk, as of a man who was pleased to plunge into a new subject; and the Mistress was far too close an observer not to understand what her son meant.

"I like whatever is good for you, Colin," she said; "but it was aye in the thought of losing time. I'm no meaning real loss of time. I'm meaning I was thinking of mair hurry than there is. But you're both awfu' young, and I like whatever is for your good, Colin," said the tender mother. She kept folding back his heavy locks as she spoke, altogether disconcerted and at a loss, poor soul; for Colin's calmness did not seem to his mother quite consistent with his love; and a possibility of a marriage without that foundation was to Mrs. Campbell the most hideous of all suppositions. And then, like a true woman as she was, she went back to her little original romance, and grew more confused than ever.

"I'm maybe an awfu' foolish woman," she said, with an attempt at a smile, which Colin was somehow conscious of, though he did not see it, "but, even if I am, you'll no be angry at your mother. Colin, my man, maybe it's no the best thing for you that thae folk at the castle should be here?"

"Which folk at the castle?" said Colin, who had honestly forgotten for the moment. "Oh, the Franklands! What should it matter to me?"

This time he turned round upon her with eyes of unabashed surprise, which the Mistress found herself totally unprepared to meet. It was now her turn to falter, and stammer, and break down.

"Eh, Colin, it's so hard to ken," said the Mistress. "The heart's awfu' deceitful. I'm no saying one thing or another; for I canna read what you're thinking, though you are my ain laddie; but if you were to thiuk it best no to enter into temptation"—

"Meaning Miss Matty?" said Colin; and he laughed with such entire freedom that his mother was first silenced and then offended by his levity. "No fear of that, mother; and then she has Harry, I suppose, to keep her right."

"I'm no so clear about that," said Mrs. Campbell, nettled, notwithstanding her satisfaction, by her son's indifierence; "he's away abroad somewhere; but I would not say but what there might be another," she continued, with natural *esprit du corps*, which was still more irritated by Colin's calm response, —

"Or two or three others," said the young man; "but, for all that, you are quite right to stand up for her, mother; only I am not in the least danger. No, I must get to work," said Colin; "hard work, without any more nonsense; but I'd like to show those fellows that a man may choose to be a Scotch minister though he is Fellow of an English college"—

The Mistress interrupted her son with the nearest approach to a scream which her Scotch self-control would admit of. "A Fellow of an English college," she said, in dismay, "and you troth-plighted to an innocent young woman that trusts in you, Colin! That I should ever live to hear such words out of the mouth of a son of mine!"

And, notwithstanding his explanations, the Mistress retired to her own room, ill at ease, and with a sense of coming trouble. "A man that's engaged to be married shouldna be thinking of such an awfu' offput of time," she said to herself; "and ah, if the poor lassie is aye trusting to his coming, and looking for him day by day." This thought took away from his mother half the joy of Colin's return. Perhaps her cherished son, too, was growing "worldly," like his father, who thought of the "beasts" even in

his dreams. And, as for Colin himself, he, too, felt the invisible curb upon his free actions, and chafed at it in the depths of his heart when he was alone. With all this world of work and ambition before him, it was hard to feel upon his proud neck that visionary rein. Though Alice had set him free in her little letter, it was still in her soft fingers that this shadowy bond remained. He had not repudiated it, even in his most secret thoughts; but, as soon as he began to act independently, he became conscious of the bondage, and in his heart resented it. If he had brought her home, as he had intended, to his father's house, his young dependent wife, he probably would have felt much less clearly how he had thus forestalled the future, and mortgaged his very life.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE Balliol Scholarship was, however, too important a reality to leave the young candidate much time to consider his position — and Colin's history would be too long, even for the patience of his friends, if we were to enter into this part of his life in detail. Everybody knows he won the scholarship; and, indeed, neither that, nor his subsequent career at Balliol, are matters to be recorded, since the chronicle has been already made in those popular University records which give their heroes a reputation, no doubt temporary, but while it lasts of the highest possible flavor. He had so warm a greeting from Sir Thomas Frankland that it would have been churlish on Colin's part had he declined the invitations he received to the Castle, where, indeed, Miss Matty did not want him just at that moment. Though she was not the least in the world in love with him, it is certain that between the intervals of her other amusements in that *genre*, the thought of Colin had often occurred to her mind. She thought of him with a wonderful gratitude and tenderness sometimes, as of a man who had actually loved her with the impossible love — and sometimes with a ring of pleasant laughter, not far removed from tears. Anything "between them" was utterly impossible, of course — but, perhaps, all the more for that, Miss Matty's heart, so much as there was remaining of it, went back to Colin in its vacant moments, as to a green spot upon which she could repose herself, and set down her burden of vanities for the instant. This very sentiment, however, made her little inclined to have him at the Castle, where there was at present a party staying, including, at least, one man of qualifications worthy a lady's regard. Harry and his cousin had quarrelled so often that their quarrel at last was serious, and the new man was cleverer than Harry, and not so hard to amuse; but it was difficult to go over the well-known ground with which Miss Frankland was so familiar in presence of one whom she had put through the process in a still more captivating fashion, and who was still sufficiently interested to note what she was doing, and to betray that he noted it. Colin, himself, was not so conscious of observing his old love in her new love-making as she was conscious of his observation; and, though it was only a glance now and then, a turn of the head, or raising of the eyes, it was enough to make her awkward by moments, an evidence of feeling for which Miss Matty could not forgive herself. Colin consequently was not thrown into temptation in the way his mother dreaded. The temptation he was thrown into was one of a much more subtle character. He threw himself into his work, and the preparations for his work, with all the energy of his character; he felt himself free to follow out the highest visions of life that had formed themselves among his youthful dreams. He thought of the new study on which he was about to enter, and the honors upon which he already calculated in his imagination as but stepping stones to what lay after, and offered himself up with a certain youthful effusion and superabundance to his Church and his country, for which he had assuredly something to do more than other men. And then, when Colin had got so far as this, and was tossing his young head proudly in the glory of his intentions, there came a little start and shiver, and that sense of the curb, which had struck him first after his confidence with his mother, returned to his mind. But the bondage seemed to grow more and more visionary as he went on. Alice had given him up, so to speak; she was debarred by her father from any correspondence with him, and might, for anything Colin knew, gentle and yielding as she was, be made to marry some one else by the same authority; and, though he did not discuss the question with himself in words, it became more and more hard to Colin to contemplate the possibility of having to abridge his studies and sacrifice his higher aims to the necessity of getting settled in life. If he were "settled in life" tomorrow, it could only be as an undistinguished Scotch minister, poor, so far as money was concerned, and with no higher channel either to use or fame; and, at his age, to be only like his neighbors was irksome to the young man. Those neighbors, or at least the greater part of them, were

good fellows enough in their way. So far as a vague general conception of life and its meaning went, they were superior as a class in Colin's opinion to the class represented by that gentle curate of Wodensbourne, whose soul was absorbed in the restoration of his Church, and the fit states of mind for the Sundays after Trinity; but there were also particulars in which, as a class, they were inferior to that mild and gentlemanly Anglican. As for Colin, he had not formed his ideal on any curate or even bishop of the wealthier Church. Like other fervent young men, an eager discontent with everything he saw lay at the bottom of his imaginations; and it was the development of Christianity — "more chivalrous, more magnanimous, than that of modern times" — that he thought of. A dangerous condition of mind, no doubt, and the people round him would have sneered much at Colin and his ambition had he put it into words; but, after all, it was an ideal worth contemplating which he presented to himself. In the midst of these thoughts, and of all the future possibilities of life, it was a little hard to be suddenly stopped short, and reminded of Mariana in her moated grange, sighing, "He does not come." If he did come, making all the unspeakable sacrifices necessary to that end, as his mother seemed to think he should, the probabilities were that the door of the grange would be closed upon him; and who could tell but that Alice, always so docile, might be diverted even from the thought of him by some other suitor presented to her by her father? Were Colin's hopes to be sacrificed to her possible faith, and the possible relenting of Mr. Meredith? And, alas! amid all the new impulses that were rising within him, there came again the vision of that woman in the clouds, whom as yet, though he had been in love with Matty Frankland, and had all but married Alice Meredith, Colin had never seen. She kissed her shadowy hand to him by times out of those rosy vapors which floated among the hills when the sun had gone down, and twilight lay sweet over the Holy Loch — and beckoned him on, on, to the future and the distance where she was. When the apparition had glanced out upon him after this old fashion, Colin felt all at once the jerk of the invisible bridle on his neck, and chafed at it; and then he shut his eyes wilfully, and rushed on faster than before, and did his best to ignore the curb. After all, it was no curb if it were rightly regarded. Alice had released, and her father had rejected him, and he had been accused of fortune-hunting, and treated like a man unworthy of consideration. So far as external circumstances went, no one could blame him for inconstancy, no one could imagine that the engagement thus broken was, according to any code of honor, binding upon Colin; but yet — This was the uncomfortable state of mind in which he was when he finally committed himself to the Balliol Scholarship, and thus put off that "settling in life" which the Mistress thought due to Alice. When the matter was concluded, however, the young man became more comfortable. At all events, until the termination of his studies, no decision, one way or other, could be expected from him; and it would still be two years before Alice was of the age to decide for herself. He discussed the matter — so far as he ever permitted himself to discuss it with any one — with Lauderdale, who managed to spend the last Sunday with him at Ramore. It was only October, but winter had begun betimes, and a sprinkling of snow lay on the hills at the head of the loch. The water itself, all crisped and brightened by a slight breeze and a frosty sun, lay dazzling between its gray banks, reflecting every shade of color upon them; the russet lines of wood with which their little glens were outlined, and the yellow patches of stubble, or late corn, still unreaped, that made the lights of the landscape, and relieved the hazy green of the pastures, and the brown waste of withered bracken and heather above. The wintry day, the clearness of the frosty air, and the touch of snow on the hills, gave to the Holy Loch that touch of color which is the only thing ever wanting to its loveliness; a color cold, it is true, but in accordance with the scene. The waves came up with a lively cadence on the beach, and the wind blew showers of yellow leaves in the faces of the two friends as they walked home together from the church. Sir Thomas had detained them in the first place, and after him the minister, who had emerged from his little vestry in time for half an hour's conversation with his young parishioner, who was something of a hero on the Holy Loch — a hero, and yet subject to the inevitable touch of familiar depreciation which belongs to a prophet in his own country. The crowd of church-goers had dispersed from the roads when the two turned their faces towards Ramore. Perhaps by reason of the yew-trees under which they had to pass, perhaps because this Sunday, too, marked a crisis, it occurred to both of them to think of their walk through the long ilex avenues of the Frascati villa, the Sunday after Meredith's death. It was Lauderdale, as was natural, who returned to that subject the first.

"It's a wee hard to believe that it's the same world," he said, "and that you and me are making our way to Ramore, and not to yon painted cha'amer, and our friend, with her distaff in her hand. I'm whiles no clear in my mind that we were ever there."

At which Colin was a little impatient, as was natural. "Don't be fantastic," he said. "It does not matter about Sora Antonia; but there are other things not so easily dropped;" and here the young man paused and uttered a sigh, which arose half from a certain momentary longing for the gentle creature to whom his faith was plighted, and half from an irksome sense of the disadvantages of having plighted his faith.

"Ay," said Lauderdale, "I'm no fond myself of dropping threads like that. There's nae telling when they may be joined again, or how; but if it's ony comfort to you, Colin, I'm a great believer in sequences. I never put ony faith in things breaking off clean in an arbitrary way. Thae two didna enter your life to be put out again by the will of an old fool of a father. I'll no say that I saw the requirements of Providence just as clear as you thought you did, but I canna put faith in an ending like what's happened. You and her are awfu' young. You have time to wait."

"Time to wait," repeated Colin in his impatience; "there is something more needed than time. Mr. Meredith has returned me my last letter with a request that I should not trouble his daughter again. You do not think a man can go on in the face of that."

"He's naething but a jailer, callant," said Lauderdale; "no that I am saying anything against an honorable occupation," he continued, after a moment's pause, with a grim smile crossing his face; "there was a man at Ephesus in that way of living that I've aye had an awfu' respect for — but the poor bit bonnie bird in the cage is neither art nor part in that. When the time comes we'll a' ken better; and here, in the meantime, you are making another beginning of your life."

"It appears to me I am always — making beginnings," said Colin. "It was much such a day as this when Harry Frankland fell into the loch — that was a kind of beginning in its way. Wodensbourne was a beginning, and so was Italy — and now — It appears life is made up of such."

"You're no so far wrong there," said Lauderdale; "but it's grand to make the new start like you, with a' heaven and earth on your side. I've kent them that had to set their face to the brae with baith earth and heaven against them — or any way so it seemed. It's ill getting new images," said the philosopher meditatively. "I wonder who it was first found out that life was a journey. It's no an original idea nowadays, but its aye awfu' true. A man sets out with a hantle mair things than he needs, *impedimenta* of a' kinds; but he leaves the maist of them behind afore he's reached the middle of the road. You've an awfu' body of opinions, callant, besides other things to dispose o'. I'm thinking Oxford will do you good for that. You're no likely to take up with their superfluities, and you'll get rid of some of your ain."

"I don't know what you call superfluities," said Colin. "I don't think I am a man of many opinions. A few things are vital and cannot be dispensed with, and these you are quite as distinct upon as I can be. However, I don't go to Oxford to learn that."

"I'm awfu' curious to ken in a general way," said Lauderdale, "what you are going to Oxford to learn. Latin and Greek and Mathematics? You're no a bad hand at the classics, callant. I would like to ken what it was that you were meaning to pay three good years of life to learn."

Upon which Colin laughed, and felt, without knowing why, a flush come to his cheek. "If I should prefer to win my spurs somewhere else than at home," said the young man lightly, "should you wonder at that? Beside, the English universities have a greater reputation than ours — and in short" —

"For idle learning," said Lauderdale with a little heat; "not for the science of guiding men, which, so far as I can see, is what you're aiming at. No that I'm the man to speak ony blasphemy against the dead languages," said the philosopher, "if the like of that was to be your trade; but for a Scotch parish, or maybe a Scotch presbytery — or in the course of time, if a goes well, an Assembly of the Kirk" —

"Stuff," cried Colin; "does not all mental discipline train a man, whatever his destination may be? Besides," the young man said with a laugh, half of pride, half of shame, "I want to show these fellows that a man may win their honors and carry them back to the old Church, which they talk about in a benevolent way, as if it was in the South Sea Islands. Well, that is my weakness. I want to bring their prizes back here, and wear them at home.

"The callant's crazy," said Lauderdale, but the idea was sufficiently in accord with his national sentiments to be treated with

indulgence; "but, as for sticking a wheen useless feathers into the douce bonnet of a sober old Kirk like ours, I see nae advantage in it. It might maybe be spoiling the Egyptians," added the philosopher grimly, "but as for ony good to us — You're like a' young creatures, callant; you're awfu' fond of the *impedimenta*. Reputation of that description is a fashious thing to carry about, not to say that three years of a callant's life is no a time to be calculated upon. You may change your mind two or three times over between that and this."

"You have very little respect for my constancy, Lauderdale," said Colin; and then he felt irritated with himself for the word he had used. "In what respect do you suppose I can change my mind?" he asked with a little impatience; and Colin lifted his eyes full upon his friend's face, as he had learned to do when there was question of Alice, though certainly it could not be supposed that there was any question of Alice in the present case.

"Whisht, callant," said Lauderdale; "I've an awfu' trust in your constancy. It's one o' the words I like best in the English language, or in the Scotch either for that matter. It's a kind of word that canna be slipped over among a crowd, but craves full saying and a' its letters sounded. As I was saying," he continued, changing his tone, "I'm a great believer in sequences; there's mony new beginnings, but there's nae absolute end short of dying, which is aye an end for this world, so far as a man can see. And, next to God and Christ, which are the grand primitive necessities, without which no man can take his journey, I'm aye for counting true love and good faith. I wouldna say but what a' the rest were more or less *impedimenta*," said Lauderdale; "but that's no the question under discussion. You might change your mind upon a' the minor matters, and no be inconstant. For example, you might be drawn in your mind to the English kirk after three years; or you might come to think you were destined for nae kirk at all, but for other occupations in this world; and, as for me, I wouldna blame you. As long as you're true to your Master — and next to yoursel' — and next to them that trust you," said Colin's faithful counsellor; "and of that I've no fear."

"I did not think of setting the question on such a solemn basis," said Colin with an amount of irritation which annoyed himself, and which he could not subdue; "however, time will show; and here we are at Ramore." Indeed the young man was rather glad to be so near Ramore. This talk of constancy exasperated him, he could not tell how; for, to be sure, he meant no inconstancy. Yet, when the sunset came again, detaching rosy cloudlets from the great masses of vapor, and shedding a mist of gold and purple over the hills — and when those wistful stretches of "daffodil sky" opened out over the western ramparts of the Holy Loch — Colin turned his eyes from the wonderful heavens as if from a visible enemy. Was not she there as always, that impossible woman, wooing him on into the future, into the unimaginable distance where somewhere she might be found any day waiting him? He turned his back upon the west, and went down of his own will to the dark shade of the yew-trees, which were somehow like the ilex alleys of the sweet Alban hills; but even there he carried his impatience with him, and found it best on the whole to go home and give himself up to the home talk of Ramore, in which many questions were discussed unconnected with the beasts, but where this one fundamental question was for the present named no more.

CHAPTER XLII.

COLIN'S career at Oxford does not lie in the way of his present historian, though, to be sure, a few piquant particulars might be selected of the way in which a pair of young Scotch eyes, with a light in them somewhat akin to genius, but trained to see the realities of homely life on the Holy Loch, regarded the peculiar existence of the steady, artificial old world, and the riotous but submissive new world, which between them form a university. Colin who, like most of his countrymen, found a great deal of the "wit" of the community around him to be sheer nonsense, sometimes agreeable, sometimes much the reverse, had also like his nation a latent but powerful sense of humor, which, backed by a few prejudices, and stimulated a little by the different manners current in the class to which he himself belonged, revealed to him many wonderful absurdities in the unconscious microcosm which felt itself a universe, — a revelation which restored any inequality in the balance of affairs, and made the Scotch undergraduate at his ease in his new circumstances. For his own part, he stood in quite a different position from the host of young men, most of them younger than himself, by whom he found himself surrounded. They were accomplishing without any very definite object the natural and usual course of their education — a process which everybody had to go through, and which, with more or less

credit, their fathers, brothers, friends, and relatives had passed through before them. Life beyond the walls of the University had doubtless its objects more interesting than the present routine; but there was no such immediate connection between those objects and that routine as Colin had been accustomed to see in his Scotch college. As for Colin himself, he was aiming at a special end, which made his course distinct for him among his more careless companions; he was bent on the highest honors attainable by hard work and powers much above the average; and this determination would have acted as a moral shield to him against the meaner temptations of the place, even if he had not already been by disposition and habits impervious to them. The higher danger — the many temptations to which Colin, like other young men, was exposed, of contenting himself with a brilliant unproductive social reputation — were warded off from him by the settled determination with which he entered upon his work. For Scotch sentiment is very distinct on this question; and Colin understood perfectly that, if he returned with only a moderate success, his *Alma Mater* would be utterly disgusted with her pet student, and his reputation would fall to a considerably lower ebb than if he had been content to stay at home. He came upon that tranquil academic scene in the true spirit of an invader; not unfriendly — on the contrary, a keen observer of everything, an eager and interested spectator of all the peculiar habitudes of the foreign country — but chiefly bent upon snatching the laurel, as soon as that should be possible, and carrying home his spoil in triumph. He entered Oxford, in short, as the Czar Peter, had he been less a savage, might have been supposed to establish himself in the bosom of the homely English society of his time, seeing, with eyes brightened by curiosity and the novelty of the spectacle, various matters in a ridiculous light which were performed with the utmost gravity and unconsciousness by the accustomed inhabitants; and, on the other hand, discovering as many particulars from which he might borrow some advantage to his own people. Certainly, Czar Peter, who was at once an absolute monarch and the most enlightened man of his nation, stood in a somewhat different position from the nameless Scotch student, between whom and other Scotch students no ordinary observer could have discovered much difference; but the aspirations of young men of Colin's age are fortunately unlimited by reason, and the plan he had conceived of working a revolution in his native Church and country, or, at least, aiming at that to the highest extent of his powers, was as legitimate, to say the least, as the determination to make a great fortune with which other young men of his nation have confronted the world. Colin frequented the Oxford churches as he had frequented those in Rome, with his paramount idea in his mind, and listened to the sermons in them with that prevailing reference to the audience which he himself expected, which gave so strange an aspect to much that he heard. To be sure, it was not the best way to draw religious advantage for himself from the teachings he listened to; but yet the process was not without its benefits to the predestined priest. He seemed to himself to be looking on while the University preacher delivered his dignified periods, not to the actual assembly, but to a shrewd and steady Scotch congregation, not easily moved either to reverence or enthusiasm, and with a national sense of logic. He could not help smiling to himself when, in the midst of some elaborate piece of reasoning, the least little step aside landed the speaker upon that quagmire of ecclesiastical authority which with Colin's audience would go far to neutralize all the argument. The young man fancied he could see the elders shake their heads, and the rural philosophers remark to each other, "He maun have been awfu' ill off for an argument afore he landed upon you." And, when the preacher proceeded to "our Church's admirable arrangements," and displayed with calm distinctness the final certainty that perfection had been absolutely attained by that venerated mother, the young Scotchman felt a prick of contradiction in his heart on his own account as well as that of his imaginary audience. He thought to himself that the same arguments employed on behalf of the Church of Scotland would go a long way towards unsettling the national faith, and smiled within himself at the undoubting assumption which his contradictory northern soul was so far from accepting. He was not a bad emblem of his nation in this particular, at least. He consented without a remonstrance to matters of detail, such as were supposed by anybody, who had curiosity enough to inquire into the singular semi-savage religious practices of Scotland, to be specially discordant to the ideas of his country; but he laughed at "our Church's admirable arrangements" in such a manner as to set the hair of the University on end. The principles of apostolic succession and unbroken ecclesiastical descent produced in this daring young sceptic, not indignation nor argument, which might have

been tolerated, but an amused disregard which was unbearable. He was always so conscious of what his Scotch audience, buried somewhere among the hills in the seclusion of a country parish, would think of such pretentions, and laughed not at the doctrine so much as at the thought of their reception of it. In this respect the young Scotchman, embodying his country, was the most contradictory of men.

He was not very much more satisfactory in the other region, where the best of Anglicans occasionally wander, and where men who hold with the firmest conviction the doctrine of apostolic succession sometimes show a strange degree of uncertainty about things more important. Colin's convictions were vague enough on a great many matters which were considered vital on the Holy Loch; and perhaps he was not a much more satisfactory hearer in his parish church at home than he was in Oxford when there was question of the descendants of the apostles. But amidst this sea of vague and undeveloped thought, which was not so much doubt as uncertainty, there stood up several rocks of absolute faith which were utterly impervious to assault. His mind was so far conformed to his age that he could hear even these ultimate and fundamental matters canvassed by the calm philosophers about him, without any undue theological heat or passion of defence; but it soon became evident that on these points the young Scotchman was immovable, a certainty which made him an interesting study to some of his companions and teachers. It would be foolish to say that his faith procured for him that awe and respect which the popular mind takes it for granted a company of sceptics must always feel for the one among them who retains his religious convictions. On the contrary, Colin's world was amused by his belief. It was, itself to start with, a perfectly pious, well-conducted world, saying its prayers like everybody else, and containing nothing within its placid bosom which in the least resembled the free-thinkers of ancient days. The Church was not the least in the world in danger from that mild fraternity, to which every kind of faith was a thing to be talked about, to evolve lines of thought upon, and give rise to the most refined, and acute, and charming conversation. But as for Colin, they regarded him with an amused observation as a rare specimen of the semi-cultivated, semi-savage intelligence which is always so refreshing to a society which has refined itself to a point somewhat beyond nature. He was "a most interesting young man," and they found in him "a beautiful enthusiasm," an "engaging simplicity." As for Colin, he was quite aware of the somewhat unfounded admiration with which he was regarded, and smiled in his turn at his observers with a truer consciousness of the humor of the position than they could possibly have who saw only half of it; but he kept his shrewd Scotch eyes open all the time, and half unconciously made himself acquainted with a great many new developments of that humanity which was to be the material of all the labors of his life. He had it in his power to remark the exact and delicate points at which Anglicanism joined on to the newer fashion of intellectualism, and to note how a morsel of faith the less might be now and then conciliated and made up for by a morsel of observance the more; and, beside this, he became aware of the convenient possibility of dividing a man, and making him into two or three different "beings," as occasion required; so that the emotional human being — having sundry natural weaknesses, such as old association and youthful habit, and a regard to the feelings of others, not to speak of the affectionate prejudices of a good Churchman — was quite free to do his daily service at chapel, and say his prayers, even at the very moment when the intellectual being was busy with the most delicate demonstration that prayer in a universe governed by absolute law was an evident absurdity and contradiction of all reason. Colin for his part looked on at this partition, and smiled in his turn. He was not shocked, as perhaps he ought to have been; but then, as has been said, he too was a man of his age, and found many things which were required by absolute orthodoxy unnecessary *impedimenta*, as Lauderdale had called them. But, with all this, the young man had never been able to cut himself in half, and he would not learn to regard the process as one either advantageous or honorable. Such, apart from the work which was necessary in obedience to his grand original impulse, were the studies he pursued in Oxford. At the same time he had another occupation in hand, strangely out of accord at once with those studies and with his own thoughts. This was the publication of poor Meredith's book, the "Voice from the Grave," at which he had labored to the latest moment of his life. In it was represented another world, an altogether contradictory type of existence. Between Colin's intellectual friends, to whom the "Hereafter" was a curious and interesting but altogether baffling subject of investigation, and the dying youth who had gone out of this world in a dauntless primitive confidence of finding himself at once in the shining streets

and endless sunshine of the New Jerusalem, the difference was so great as to be past counting. As for the young editor, his view of life was as far different from Meredith's as it was from that of his present companions. The great light of heaven was to Colin, as to many others, as impenetrable as the profoundest darkness; he could neither see into it, nor permit himself to make guesses of what was going on beyond; and, consequently, he had little sympathy with the kind of piety which regards life as a preparation for death. Sometimes he smiled, sometimes he sighed over the proofs as he corrected them; sometimes, but for knowing as he did the utter truthfulness with which the dead writer had set forth his one-sided and narrow conception of the world, Colin would have been disposed to toss into the fire those strange warnings and exhortations. But when he thought of the young author, dead in his youth, and of all the doings and sayings of those months in which they lived together, and, more touching still, of those conversations that were held on the very brink of the grave, and at the gate of heaven, his heart smote him. And then his new friends broke in upon him, and discussed the proofs with opinions so various that Colin could but admire and wonder. One considered them a curious study of the internal consciousness, quite worthy the attention of a student of mental phenomena. Another was of opinion that such stuff was the kind of nutriment fit for the uneducated classes, who had strong religious prejudices, and no brains to speak of. When Colin found his own sentiments thrown back to him in this careless fashion, he began to see for the first time the conceit and self-importance of his judgement. For Meredith had faced death with that faith of his, and was at least as well able to judge as his present critic. The result was that the young man, thus seeing his own defects reflected out of the eyes of others, learned humbleness, and went on with his work of editing, without judging. Other lessons of a similar kind came to him in the same way unawares; and thus he went on, thinking still of that parish church in Scotland in which all these gifts of his would be utterly lost and buried according to the judgment of the world.

"If you have set your heart on being a parson," some one said to him — and he could not help recalling the time when Sir Thomas Frankland had said exactly the same — "go into the Church, at least. Hang it! Campbell, don't go and bind yourself to a conventicle," said his anxious acquaintance; "a man has always the chance of doing something in the Church."

"That is precisely my idea," said Colin, "though you fellows seem to think it the last possibility. And, besides, it is the only thing I can do, with my ideas. I can't be a statesman, as you have a chance of being, and I have not an estate to manage. What else would you have me do?"

"My dear fellow," said another of his friends, "you are as sure of a Fellowship as any man ever was. Go in for literature, and send your old Kirk to Jericho: a fellow like you has nothing to do in such a place. One knows the sort of thing precisely; any blockhead that can thump his pulpit, and drone out long prayers" —

"That is our weak point," said Colin, who felt much more disposed to be angry than became his philosophy, "but nobody can make public prayers now-a-days; it's a forgotten faculty. Many thanks for your advice, but I prefer my own profession. It should be good for something, if any profession ever was."

"Well, now, taking it at the very best, how much do you think you are likely to have a year? — a hundred and fifty perhaps? No, I don't mean to say that's final; — but, of course, a thoughtful fellow like you takes it into consideration," said Colin's adviser; "everything is badly paid now-a-days — but, at all events, there are chances. If a man is made of iron and brass, and has the resolution of an elephant, he may get to be something at the Bar, you know, and make a mint of money. And even in the Church, to be sure, if he's harmless and civil, something worth having may come in his way; but you are neither civil nor harmless, Campbell. And, by Jove! it's not the Church you're thinking of, but the Kirk, which is totally different. I've been in Scotland," continued the Mentor, with animation; "it's not even one Kirk, which would be something. But there's one at the top of the hill and one at the bottom, and I defy any man to tell which is which. Come, Campbell, don't be a Quixote — give it up!"

"You might as well have told my namesake to give up the Queen's service after he had lost a battle," said Colin. "I don't suppose Sir Colin ever did lose a battle, by the way. I am not the sort of stuff for a Fellow of Balliol," said the young man; "I'd like to work among men — that is my idea of being a priest, or clergyman, or minister, or whatever you choose to call it. Next to that I should like to command a regiment, I believe — that's my ambition; and I don't mean, you may be sure, to desert my standard, and take to writing books, even if I could do it. Yes, you are perfectly right," said Colin, turn-

ing round upon one of his visitors, who was silent — "it is almost the only kind of kingship possible to a son of the soil."

"I never said so," said the young man he addressed, in a patronizing tone; "I thought, indeed, you expressed yourself very well, Campbell. It is a curious study altogether. Scotland, though it is what one may call a nation of dissenters, is always an interesting country. If you happened to be of the seed of the martyrs, you might lead her back to a better faith."

At which Colin laughed, and forgot his momentary irritation. "None of you know anything about it; let us postpone our conclusion in the meantime for ten years," said the cheerful young autocrat. Ten years was like to be an eventful period to all that little assembly who were standing on the verge of life; but they all made very light of it, as was natural. As for Colin, he did not attempt to make out to himself any clear plan of what he intended to do and to be in ten years. Certainly, he calculated upon having by that time reached the highest culmination of which life was capable. That he meant to be a prince in his own country was a careless expression, unintentionally arrogant, and said out of the fulness of his heart, as so many things are for which an account has to be given in latter years; for, in reality, the highest projects that could move the spirit of a man were in Colin's mind. He had no thought of becoming a popular preacher, or the oracle of a coterie; and the idea of personal advancement never came into his head, rash though his words were. What he truly intended was not quite known to himself, in the vague but magnificent stirrings of his ambition. He meant to take possession of some certain corner of his native country, and make of it an ideal Scotland, manful in works and steadfast in belief; and he meant from that corner to influence and move all the land in some mystical method known only to the imagination. Such are the splendid colors in which fancy, when sufficiently lively, can dress up even such a sober reality as the life of a Scotch minister. While he planned this, he seemed to himself so entirely a man of experience, ready to smile at the notions of undisciplined youth, that he succeeded in altogether checking and deceiving his own inevitable good sense — that watchful monitor which warns an imaginative mind of its extravagance. This was the great dream which, interrupted now and then by lighter fancies, had accompanied Colin more or less clearly through all his life. And now the hour of trial was about to come, and the young man's ambition was ready to accomplish itself as best it might.

PART XV.

CHAPTER XLIII.

It is unnecessary to say that Colin won the prize on which he had set his heart. The record is extant in the University, to save his historian trouble; and, to be sure, nobody can be supposed to be ignorant on so important a point — at least nobody who is anybody and has a character to support. He took a double first-class — as he had set his heart on doing — and thereby obtained, as some great man once said in a speech, an equal standing to that of a duke in English society. It is to be feared that Colin did not experience the full benefits of his elevation; for, to be sure, such a dukedom is of a temporary character, and was scarcely likely to survive beyond his year. But the prize when it was won, and all the long details of the process of winning it, were not without their effect upon him. Colin, being still young and inexperienced, had, indeed, the idea that the possessor of such a distinction needed but to signify his august will, and straightway every possible avenue of advancement would open before him. But for that idea, the pride of carrying home his honours, and laying them at the feet of his native church and country, would have been much lessened; and to tell the truth, when the moment of triumph came, Colin yielded a little to the intoxication, and lent his thoughts, in spite of himself, to those charmed voices of ambition which, in every allegory that ever was invented, exercise their siren influence on the young man at the beginning of his career. He waited to be wooed at that eventful moment. He had a vague idea at the bottom of his heart that the State and the Church, and the Bar and the Press, would all come forward openarmed to tempt the hero of the year; and he had nobly determined to turn a deaf ear to all their temptations, and cling to his natural vocation, the profession to which he had been trained, with a constancy to which the world could not fail to do honour. Colin accordingly took possession of his honours with a little expectation, and waited for these siren-voices. When they did not come, the young man was a little astonished, a little mortified and cast down for the moment. But after that, happily the absurdity of the position struck him. He burst into sudden laughter in his rooms, where he sat in all the new gloss of his fame and dignity, with much congratulation from his friends, but no particular excitement on the part of the world. Great Britain, as it appeared for the moment, was not so urgently in want of a new Secretary of State as to contest the matter with the parish of Glentummel, which had a claim upon the young man as its minister; and neither the *Times* nor the *Quarterly Review* put then forth any pretensions to him. And University life, to which he might have had a successful *entrée*, did not exercise ony charm upon Colin. A tutorship, though with unlimited prospect of pupils, and hopes of reaching soon the august elevation of Master, was not the vocation on which he had set his heart. The consequence was, as we have said, that the new Fellow of Balliol remained expectant for some time, then began to feel mortified and disappointed, and finally arose, with a storm of half-indignant laughter, to find that, after all, his position was not vitally changed by his successes. This was a strange, and perhaps in some respects a painful, discovery for a young man to make. He had distinguished himself among his fellows as much as a young soldier who had made himself the hero of a campaign would have distinguished himself among his; but this fact had very little effect upon his entry into the world. If he had been the Duke's son, his first-class glories would have been a graceful addition to the natural honours of his name, and perhaps might have turned towards him with favour the eyes of some of those great persons who hold the keys of office in their hands. But Colin was only the farmer of Ramore's son, and his prize did him no more good than any other useless laurel — except indeed that it might have helped him to advancement in the way of pupils, had that been Colin's *rôle*. But considering how honourable a task it is to rear the new generation, it is astonishing how little enthusiasm generally exists among young men for that fine and worthy office. Colin had not the least desire to devote himself henceforward to the production of other first-class men — though, doubtless, that would have been a very laudable object of ambition; and, notwithstanding his known devotion to the "Kirk," as his Oxford friends liked to call it, the young man was, no doubt, a little disappointed to find himself entirely at liberty to pursue his vocation. To be sure, Colin's "set" still remonstrated against his self-immolation, and assured him that with his advantages fabulous things might be done. But the young Scotchman was too clear-sighted not to see that a great many of his congratulating friends had a very faint idea what to do with themselves, though some of them were but a step or two beneath him in honours. And, in the mean time, Colin felt quite conscious that the world gave no

sign of wanting him, nor even availed itself of the commonest opportunities of seeking his invaluable services. A man who takes such a discovery in good part, and can turn back without bitterness upon his original intentions, is generally a man good for something; and this is precisely what, with much less flourish of trumpets than at the beginning, Colin found it necessary to do.

But he was not sorry to pay a visit to Wodensbourne, where he was invited after his victory, and to take a little time to think it all over. Wodensbourne had always been a kind of half-way house. It stood between him and his youthful life, with its limited external circumstances and unlimited expectations — and that other *real* life — the life of the man, wonderfully enlarged in outward detail, and miraculously shrunk and confined in expectation — which by the force of the contrast, young as he was, seemed to make two men of Colin. It was there first that he learned to distinguish between the brilliant peasant-firmament of Ramore, full of indistinct mists of glory, underneath which everything was possible — an atmosphere in which poor men rose to the steps of the throne, and princesses married pages, and the world was still young and fresh and primitive; and that more real sky in which the planets shone fixed and unapproachable, and where everything was bound by bonds of law and order, forbidding miracle. The more Colin had advanced, the more had he found advancement impossible according to the ideas entertained of it in his original sphere; and it was at Wodensbourne that he had first made this grand discovery. It was there he had learned the impossibility of the fundamental romance which at the bottom of their hearts most people like to believe in — of that love which can leap over half a world to unite two people and to make them happy ever after, in spite not only of differences of fortune but of the far larger and greater differences by which society is regulated. Colin was on perfectly pleasant terms with Miss Matty by this time, and did not hide from himself how much he owed her, — though perhaps she, who owed him a momentary perception of the possibility which she had proved to his heart and understanding to be impossible, would have been but little grateful had she been made aware of the nature of his indebtedness. And now, having made still another discovery in his life, the young man was pleased to come to Wodensbourne to think over it, and make out what it meant. And the Franklands were, as always, very kind to Colin. Miss Matty, who had had a great many nibbles in the interval, was at length on the eve of being married. And Harry, who had nothing particular to do, and who found Wodensbourne stupid now that he was not to marry his cousin, was abroad, nobody seemed exactly to know where; and various things, not altogether joyful, had happened in the family since the far-distant age when Colin was the tutor, and had been willing for Miss Matty's sake to resign everything, if it should even be his life.

"It will be a very nice marriage," said Lady Frankland. "I will not conceal from you, Mr. Campbell, that Matty has been very thoughtless, and given us a great deal of anxiety. It is always so much more difficult, you know, when you have the charge of a girl who is not your own child. One can say anything to one's own child; but your niece, you know — and, indeed, not even your own, but your husband's niece" —

"But I am sure Miss Frankland is as much attached to you," said Colin, who did not like to hear Matty blamed, "as if" —

"Oh yes," said Lady Frankland; "but still it is different. You must not think I am the least vexed about Harry. I never thought her the proper person for Harry. He has so much feeling, though strangers do not see it; and, if he had been disappointed in his wife after they were married, fancy what my feelings would have been, Mr. Campbell. I was always sure they never would have got on together; and you know, when that is the case, it is so much better to break off at once."

"What is that you are saying about breaking off at once?" said Miss Matty, who came into the room at that moment. "It must be Mr. Campbell who is consulting you, aunt. I thought he would have asked *my* advice in such a case. I do believe my lady has forgotten that there ever was a time when she was not married and settled, and that is why she gives you such cruel advice. Mr. Campbell, I am much the best counsellor, and I beg of you, don't break it off at once!" said Miss Matty, looking up in his face with eyes that were half mocking and half pathetic. She knew very well it was herself whom my lady had been talking of — which made her the more disposed to send back the arrow upon Colin. But Matty, after all, was a good deal disconcerted — more disconcerted than he was, when she saw the sudden flush that came to Colin's face. Naturally, no woman likes to make the discovery that a man who has once been her worshipper has learned to transfer his affections to somebody else.

When she saw that this chance shaft had touched him, she herself was conscious of a sudden flush — a flush which had nothing whatever to do with love, but proceeded from the indescribable momentary vexation and irritation with which she regarded Colin's desertion. That he was her adorer no longer was a fact which she had consented to; but Miss Matty experienced a natural movement of indignation when she perceived that he had elevated some one else to the vacant place. "Oh, if you look like that, I shall think it quite unnecessary to advise," she said with a little spitefulness, lowering her voice.

"What do I look like?" said Colin with a smile; for Lady Frankland had withdrawn to the other end of the room, and the young man was perfectly disposed to enter upon one of the half-mocking, half-tender conversations which had given a charm to his life of old.

"What do you look like?" said Miss Matty. "Well, I think you look a great deal more like other people than you used to do; and I hate men who look like everybody else. One can generally tell a woman by her dress," said the young lady pensively; "but most men that one meets in society want to have little labels with their names on them. I never can tell any difference between one and another for my part."

"Then perhaps it would clear the haze a little if I were to name myself," said Colin. "I am Colin Campbell of Ramore, at your ladyship's service — once tutor to the learned and witty Charley, that hope of the house of Wodensbourne — and once also your ladyship's humble boatman and attendant on the Holy Loch."

"Fellow of Balliol, double-first — Coming man, and reformer of Scotland," said Miss Matty with a laugh. "Yes, I recognise you; but I am not my ladyship just yet. I am only Matty Frankland for the moment, Sir Thomas's niece, who has given my lady a great deal of trouble. Oh, yes; I know what she was saying to you. Girls who live in other people's houses know by instinct what is being said about them. Oh, to be sure, it is quite true; they have been very, very kind to me; but don't you know, it is dreadful always to feel that people are kind. Ah! how sweet it used to be on the Holy Loch. But you have forgotten one of your qualifications, Mr. Campbell; you used to be poet as well as tutor. I think, so far as I was concerned, it was the former capacity which you exercised with most applause. I have a drawer in my desk full of certain effusions; but, I suppose, now you are a Fellow of Balliol you are too dignified for that."

"I don't see any reason why I should be," said Colin; "I was a great deal more dignified, for that matter, when I was eighteen, and a student at Glasgow College, and had very much more loftly expectations then than now."

"Oh, you always were devoted to the Kirk," said Miss Matty; "which was a thing I never could understand — and now less than ever, when everybody knows that a man who has taken such honours as you have, has everything open to him."

"Yes," said Colin; "but then what everybody knows is a little vague. I should like to know of any one thing that really is open to me except taking pupils. Of course," said the young man, with dignity, "my mind is made up long ago, and my profession fixed; but for the good of other people in my position — and for my own good as well," Colin added with a laugh — "for you know it is pleasant to feel one's self a martyr, rejecting every sort of advantage for duty's sake."

"Oh, but of course it is quite true," said Matty; "you *are* giving up everything — of course it is true. You know you might go into Parliament, or you might go into the Church, or you might — I wish you would speak to my uncle about it; I suppose he knows. For my part, I think you should go into Parliament; I should read all your speeches faithfully, and always be on your side."

"That is a great inducement," said Colin. "With that certainty one could face a great many obstacles. But, on the other hand, when I have settled down somewhere in my own profession, you can come and hear me preach."

"That will not be half so interesting," said Miss Matty, making a little *moue* of disdain; "but, now, tell me," she continued, sinking her voice to its most confidential tone, "what it was that made you look so? — you know we are *very* old friends," said Miss Matty, with the least little tender touch of pathos; "we have done such quantities of things together — rowed on the Holy Loch, and walked in the woods, and discussed Tennyson, and amused Sir Thomas — you *ought* to tell me your secrets; you don't know what a good *confidante* I should be, and if I know the lady — But, at all events, you must tell me what made you look so?" said with her sweetest tone of inquisitive sympathy, the siren of Colin's youth.

"Perhaps — when you have explained

to me what it means to look *so*," said Colin; "after being buried for three years one forgets that little language. And then I am disposed to deny ever having looked *so*," he went on, laughing; but, notwithstanding his laugh, Colin was much more annoyed than became his reasonable years and new dignities to feel once more that absurd crimson rising to his hair. The more he laughed the higher rose that guilty and conscious colour; and, as for Miss Matty, she pointed her little pink finger at him with an air of triumph.

"There!" she said, "and you dare to pretend that you never looked *so!* I shall be quite vexed now if you don't tell me. If it was not something very serious," said Miss Matty, "you would not change like *that*."

"Here is Sir Thomas; he will never accuse me of looking *so*, or changing like *that* — and it is a guest's first duty to make himself agreeable to his host, is it not?" said Colin, who was rather glad of Sir Thomas's arrival. As for Matty, she was conscious that Lady Frankland had given her what she would have called "a look" before leaving the room, and that her uncle regarded her with a little anxiety as he approached. Decidedly, though she liked talking to Colin, it was necessary to be less confidential. "I won't say *au revoir*," she said, shrugging her pretty shoulders; "you know what you said about that once upon a time, when you were a poet." And then Matty felt a little sorry for herself as she went away. "They might know, if they had any sense, that it does not matter in the least what I say to *him*," the young lady said to herself; but then she was only suffering the natural penalty of a long course of conquest, and several good matches sacrificed, and matters were serious this time, and not to be trifled with. Miss Matty accordingly gave up her researches into Colin's secret; but not the less regarded, with a certain degree of lively despite, the revelation out of the clouds of that unknown woman at thought of whom Colin blushed. "I dare say it is somebody quite stupid, who does not understand him a bit," she said to herself, taking a little comfort from the thought — for Matty Frankland was not a model woman, desiring only the hero's happiness; and a man who is sufficiently insensible to console himself under such circumstances with another attachment deserves to have his inconstancy punished, as anybody will allow.

To tell the truth, Colin, though guiltless of any breach of allegiance towards Matty, was punished sufficiently for his second attempt at love. He had heard nothing of Alice all these three years, but, notwithstanding, had never ceased to feel upon his neck that invisible bridle which restrained him against his will. Perhaps, if the woman of his imagination had ever fairly revealed herself, the sight would have given him courage to break for ever such a visionary bond, and to take possession of his natural liberty; but she contented herself with waving to him those airy salutations out of the clouds, and with now and then throwing a glance at him out of the eyes of some passer-by, who either disappeared at once from his sight, or turned out upon examination to be utterly unlike that not impossible She; and Colin had two sentinels to keep watch upon his honour in the forms of his mother and Lauderdale, both of whom believed in Love, and did not know what inconstancy meant. He said to himself often enough that the struggle in his heart was not inconstancy; but then he was not a man who would admit to them, or even to himself, that the bond between him and Alice was a great and tender pity, and not love. She had been on the eve of becoming his wife — she might be his wife still for anything he knew to the contrary — and Colin, who in this respect was spotless as any Bayard, would not, even to his dearest friends, humiliate by such a confession the woman he had once sought to marry.

But now the time was almost come when he could in reality "settle in life." His Scotch parish came nearer and nearer, in the natural course of affairs, without any dazzling obstacles and temptations between it and himself, as he had once hoped; and Alice was of age by this time; and honour seemed to demand that, now when his proposal really meant something, he should offer to her the possibility of confirming her early choice. But somehow Colin was not at all anxious to take this step; he hung back, and nursed the liberty which still remained to him, and longed, in spite of himself, towards the visionary creature of his dreams, who was not Alice. Accordingly, he had two rather troublesome matters to think over at Wodensbourne, and occupied a position which was made all the more vexatious because it was at the same time amusing and ridiculous. His mind had been made up from the beginning as to his future life, as he truly said; but then he had quite intended it to be a sacrifice which he made out of his supreme love for his Church and his country. He meant to have fought his way back to the venerable mother through every sort of brilliant temptation, and to

carry his honours to her with a disinterested love which he should prove by leaving behind him still higher honours and ambitions; whereas, in reality, the world was permitting him to return very quietly to his native country as if it was the most natural thing in the world. The disappointment was perhaps harsher in its way than if Colin had meant to avail himself of those splendid imaginary chances; and it did not make it any the less hard to bear that he himself saw the humour of the situation, and could not but laugh grimly at himself. Perhaps Colin will suffer in the opinion of the readers of this history when we add that, notwithstanding the perplexing and critical character of the conjuncture, and notwithstanding the other complication in his history in regard of Alice, he employed his leisure at Wodensbourne, after the interview we have recorded, in writing verses for Miss Matty. It was true she had challenged him to some such task, but still it was undoubtedly a weakness on the part of a man with so much to think of. Truth, however, compels his historian to confess to this frivolity. As he strayed about the flat country, and through the park, the leisure in which he had intended to think over his position only betrayed him to this preposterous idleness — for, to be sure, life generally arranges itself its own way without much help from thinking; but one cannot succeed in writing a farewell to a first love, for whom one retains a certain kindness, without a due attention to one's rhymes:

Underneath we give the last copy of nonsense-verses which Colin was seduced into writing, though the chief interest they possess is chronological as marking the end of the period of life in which a man can express himself in this medium. As for Miss Matty, to tell the truth, she received them with less of her usual good grace than might have been desired; for, though in her own person she was perfectly reconciled to the loss of his devotion, and quite safe in entertaining the mildest sentiments of friendship, still she was naturally vexed a little to see how he had got over it — which was a thing not to be expected, nor perhaps desired. This, however, was the calm and self-controlled tone of Colin's farewell: —

"Be it softly, slowly said,
With a smile and with a sigh,
As life's noiseless hands untie
Links that youth has made —
Not with sorrow or with tears:
With a sigh for those sweet years,
Drawing slow apart the while;
For those sweetest years a smile.

Thus farewell! The sound is sweet;
Parting leaves no sting behind:
One bright chamber of the mind
Closing gracious and complete,
Softly shut the silent door;
Never shade can enter more —
Safe, for what is o'er can last;
Somewhat sad, for it is past.

So farewell! The accents blend
With sweet sounds of life to be;
Never could there dawn for me
Hope of any dearer end.
Dear it is afar to greet
The bright path before thy feet,
Thoughts that do thy joy no wrong
Chiming soft the even-song,
Till morn wakes the bridal bell
Fair and sweet, farewell! farewell!"

and this was the sole result, as far as anybody was aware, of Colin's brief but pleasant holiday at Wodensbourne.

CHAPTER XLIV.

It is so difficult a matter to tell the story of a man's life without wearying the audience, that we will make a leap over all the circumstances of Colin's probation in Scotland, though they were sufficiently amusing. For, naturally, the presbytery of Glen-Diarmid — in which district the Holy Loch, Colin's native parish, is situated — were a little at a loss what to make of a Fellow of Balliol when he offered himself for license. To be sure, they made a long pause over the fact of his Fellowship, which implied that he was a member of the Church of England; but the presbytery permitted Colin to be heard in defence, and he had friends among them, and had sufficient skill with his weapons to perplex and defeat any rising antagonist. Besides, it was not in the nature of a country presbytery in this tolerant age to be otherwise than a little proud of the academical honours which the young neophyte bore. "If we accept any lout who comes up for license, and refuse a lad of his attainments, what do you suppose the world will think of us?" said one of the more enlightened members of the clerical court, forgetting, as was natural, that the world concerned itself very little with the doings of the presbytery of Glen-Diarmid. "It's safe to leave all that to the objectors when he comes to be placed," said another of Colin's judges, more wary than his brother; "if he's not sound, you may trust it to them to find that out," — and the young man was accordingly endued with

the preliminary privileges of preacher, and licensed to exercise his gift. Colin had made friends all along the road of his life, as some men are happy enough to do, and had many who would have been pleased to do him a service, and one, as it happened, who at this juncture could; and so it befell that, a very short time after, the second and more serious trial to which the prudent presbyter had referred came into the life of the young preacher. He was presented, as people say in Scotland, to the parish of Lafton, in the country, or, as the natives prefer to call it, the kingdom of Fife. It was a good living enough, making up, when the harvest was of average productiveness, and wheat steady, rather more than three hundred pounds a year — and more than that when the harvest was bad and the price of corn high; — and there was an excellent manse, not much inferior to an English parsonage, and a compact little comfortable glebe, of which a minister of agricultural tastes might make something if he chose; and, above all, there were "heritors" of good conditions, and a university town, of small dimensions but wealthy in point of society, within reach — all of which points seemed to Colin's English friends a fabulous conbination of advantages to be found in a Scotch parish. Colin, however, did not fully describe the horrible gulf which lay between him and his benefice to anybody out of Scotland; for he was not the man to betray the imperfections of his beloved country, even while he suffered from them. His historian, however, does not require to exercise so much delicacy; and, as Colin's case was exactly the same as that of any other young clergyman in the Church of Scotland, there is no betrayal of confidence involved. Between him and that haven there was a channel to cross before which the boldest might have quailed. The parish of Lafton was a large parish, and there were seven hundred and fifty people in it who had a right to "object" to Colin. They had a right to object, if they liked, to his looks, or his manners, or his doctrines, or the colour of his hair; they had a right to investigate all his life, and make a complaint at "the bar of the presbytery" — which meant, at the same time, in all the local newspapers, eager for any kind of gossip — that he had once been guilty of bird's nesting, or had heard the midnight chimes at some unguarded moment of his youth. When Colin entered the pulpit for the first time in the parish to which he was presented, he made his appearance there not to instruct the congregation, but to be inspected, watched, judged, and finally objected to — and all the process was vigorously enforced in his case. For, to be sure, there were several things to be remarked in this young man — or, as the people of Lafton expressed it, "this new laud" — which were out of the way, and unlike other people. He was a lad that had not found Scotch education good enough for him, but had gone to England for at least part of his training. To be sure, he had partly made up for this by taking the highest honours possible, and coming out of the contest in a manner creditable to Scotland — which was a point in his favour. And then his prayers (which was odd, as Colin was decidedly a liturgist) were wanting in those stock expressions which, more pertinacious than any liturgy, haunt the public prayers of the ordinary ministers of the Church of Scotland; and his sermons were short and innocent of divisions, and of a tenor totally unlike what the respectable parishioners had been used to hear. Some of the shrewder elders were of opinion that this or that expression "might mean onything" — a conclusion in which there was a certain truth, for Colin, as we have said, was not perfectly clear on all points as to what he believed. If he was not altogether heterodox on the subject of eternal punishment, for example, he was, to say the least, extremely vague, and, indeed, deserted doctrinal ground altogether as often as he could, and took refuge in life and its necessities in a way which doubtless had its effect on the uninstructed multitude, but was felt to be meagre and unsatisfactory to the theologians of the parish. Two or three public meetings were held on the subject before it was time to lodge the final objections against the "presentee;" and Colin himself, who was living at St. Rule's, within a few miles of the theatre of war, naturally found those meetings, and the speeches thereat, which appeared in the *Fife Argus*, much less amusing than an impartial spectator might have done. And then the same enlightened journal contained all sorts of letters on the subject — letters in which "An Onlooker" asked whether the Rev. Mr. Campbell, whoswas presentee to the parish of Lafton, was the same Mr. Campbell who had passed a spring at Rome three or four year before, and had been noted for his leaning to the Papacy and its superstitious observances; while, on the other hand, "A Fife Elder" implored the parishioners to take notice that the man whom an Erastian patron — not himself a member of the Church, and perhaps unaware how dearly the spiritual privileges pur-

chased by the blood of their martyred forefathers are regarded by Scotsmen — thus endeavoured to force upon them was notoriously a disciple of Jowett, and belonged to the most insidious school of modern infidelity. It was the main body of the opposing army which made such attacks; but there was no lack of skirmishers, who treated the subject in a lighter manner, and addressed the obliging editor in a familiar and playful fashion: — "Sir, — Having nothing better to do last Sunday morning, I strayed into the parish church of Lafton, with the intention of worshipping with the congregation; but you may judge of my surprise when I observed ascending the pulpit-stairs a young gentleman presenting all the appearance of a London swell or a cavalry officer, with a beard upon which it was evident he had spent more time than on his sermon" — wrote a witty correspondent; while another indignant Scot demanded solemnly, "Is it to be tolerated that our very pulpits should be invaded by the scum of the English Universities, inexperienced lads that make a hash of the Prayer-book, and preach sermons that may do very well on the other side of the Tweed, but won't go down here?"

Such were the pleasant effusions with which Colin's friend at St. Rule's amused his guest at breakfast. They were very amusing to a spectator safely established in the Elysian fields of a Scotch professorship, and beyond the reach of objections; but they were not amusing, to speak of, to Colin; and the effect they produced upon the household at Ramore may be faintly imagined by the general public, as it will be vividly realized by such Scotch families as have sons in the Church. The Mistress had said to herself, with a certain placid thankfulness, "It's little they can have to say about my Colin, that has been aye the best and the kindest." But when she saw how much could be made of nothing, the indignation of Colin's mother did not prevent her from being wounded to the heart. "I will never mair believe either in justice or charity," she said, with a thrill of wrath in her voice which had never before been heard at Ramore; "him that was aye so true and faithful — him that has aye served his Master first, and made no account of this world!" And, indeed, though his mother's estimate of him might be a little too favourable, it is certain that few men more entirely devoted to his work than Colin had ever taken upon them the cure of souls. That, however, was a matter beyond the ken of the congregation and parish of Lafton. There were seven hundred and fifty communicants, and they had been well trained in doctrine under their late minister, and had a high character for intelligence; and, when an opportunity thus happily arrived for distinguishing themselves, it was not in human nature to neglect it. Had not West Port worried to the point of extinction three unhappy men whom the Crown itself had successively elevated to the unenviable distinction of presentee? The Lafton case now occupied the newspapers as the West Port case had once occupied them. It combined all the attractions of a theological controversy and a personal investigation; and, indeed, there could have been few better points of view for observing the humours of Scotch character and the peculiarities of rural Scotch society of the humbler levels; only that, as we have before said, the process was not so amusing as it might have been to Colin and his friends.

"Me ken Mr. Jowett?" said the leading weaver of Lafton; "no, I ken nothing about him. I'm no prepared to say what he believes. For that matter (but this was drawn out by cross-examination), I'm no just prepared to say at a moment's notice what I believe myself. I believe in the Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism. No, I cannot just say that I've ever read the Confession of Faith — but eh, man, you ken little about parish schools if you think I dinna ken the Catechism. Can I say 'What is Effectual Calling'? I would like to know what right you have to ask me. I'll say it at a proper time, to them that have a title to ask. I'm here to put in my objections against the presentee. I'm no here to say my questions. If I was, may be I would ken them better than you."

"Very well; but I want to understand what you know about Mr. Jowett," said the counsel for the defence.

"I've said already I ken naething about Mr. Jowett. Lord bless me! it's no a man, it's a principle we're thinking of. No, I deny that; it's no an oath. 'Lord bless me!' is a prayer, if you will be at the bottom o't. We've a' muckle need to say that. I say the presentee is of the Jowett school of infidelity; and that's the objection I'm here to support."

"But, my friend," said a member of the presbytery, "it is necessary that you should be more precise. It is necessary to say, you know, that Mr. Jowett rejects revelation; that he"—

"Moderator, I call my reverend brother to order," said another minister; "the witness is here to give evidence about Mr.

Campbell. No doubt he is prepared to show us how the presentee has proved himself to belong to the Jowett school."

"Oh ay," said the witness; "there's plenty evidence of that. I took notes mysel' of a' the sermons. Here's one of them. It's maybe a wee in my ain words, but there's nae change in the sense,—'My freends, it's aye best to look after your ain business: it's awfu' easy to condemn others. We're all the children of the Heavenly Father. I have seen devotion among a wheen poor uninstructed Papists that would put the best of you to shame'—No, that's no what I was looking for; that's the latitudinarian bit."

"I think it has been said, among other things," said another member of the presbytery, "that Mr. Campbell had a leaning towards papal error; it appears to me that the witness's note is almost a proof of that."

"Moderator," said Colin's counsel, "I beg to call your attention to the fact that we are not discussing the presentee's leaning towards papal error, but his adherence to the Jowett school of infidelity, whatever that may be. If the witness will inform us, or if any of the members of the court will inform us, what Mr. Jowett believes, we will then be able to make some reply to this part of the case."

"I dinna ken naething about Mr. Jowett," said the cautious witness. "I'm no prepared to enter into ony personal question. It's no the man but the principle that we are heeding, the rest of the objectors and me."

"The witness is perfectly right," said a conscientious presbyter; "if we were tempted to enter into personal questions there would be no end to the process. My friend, the thing for you to do in this delicate matter is to lead proof. No doubt the presentee has made some statement which has led you to identify him with Mr. Jowett. He has expressed some doubts, for example, about the origin of Christianity or the truth of revelation"—

"Order, order," cried the enlightened member; "I protest against such leading questions. Indeed, it appears to me, Moderator, that it is impossible to proceed with this part of the case unless it has been made clearly apparent to the court what Mr. Jowett believes."

Upon which there naturally ensued a lively discussion in the presbytery, in which the witness was with difficulty prevented from joining. The subject was without doubt sufficiently unfathomable to keep half-a-dozen presbyteries occupied and there were at that period, in the kingdom of Fife, men of sufficient temerity to pronounce authoritatively even upon a matter so mysterious and indefinite. The court, however, adjourned that day without coming to any decision; and even the Edinburgh papers published a report of the Lafton case, which involved so many important interests. However, an accident, quite unforeseen, occured in Colin's favour before the next meeting of his reverend judges. It happened to one of these gentlemen to meet the great heresiarch himself, who has been known to visit Scotland. This respectable presbyter did not ask—for to be sure it was at dinner—what the stranger believed; but he asked him instead if he knew Mr. Campbell, the presentee to Lafton, who had taken a first-class at Oxford. If the answer had been too favourable, Colin's fate might have been considered as sealed. "Campbell of Balliol—oh, yes; a very interesting young man; strange compound of prejudice and enlightenment. He interested me very much," said the heresiarch: and, on that ground of objection at least, Colin was saved.

He was saved on the others also, as it happened, but more by accident than by any effect which he produced on his reluctant parishioners. By dint of repeated examinations on the model of that which we have quoted above, the presbytery came to the decision that the presentee's leaning to papal error was, like his adherence to the Jowett school of theology, not proven; and they even—for presbyteries also march to a certain extent with the age—declined to consider the milder accusation brought against him, of favouring the errors of his namesake, Mr. Campbell of Row. By this time, it is true, Colin was on the point of abandoning for ever the Church to which at a distance he had been willing to give up all his ambitions, and the Mistress was wound up to such a pitch of indignant excitement as to threaten a serious illness, and Lauderdale had publically demonstrated his wrath by attending "the English chapel," as he said, "two Sundays running." As for Colin, in the quiet of St. Rule's, feeling like a culprit on his trial, and relishing not at all the notion of being taken to pieces by the papers, even though they were merely papers of Fife, he had begun to regard with some relief the idea of going back to Balliol and reposing on his Fellowship, and even taking pupils, if nothing better came in his way. If he could have gone into Parliament, as Matty Frankland suggested, the indignant young man would have seized violently on

that means of exposing to the House and the world the miseries of a Scotch presentee and the horrors of Lord Aberdeen's Act. But, fortunately, he had no means of getting into Parliament, and a certain sense at the bottom of his heart that this priesthood which had to be entered by a channel so painful and humiliating was in reality his true vocation retained him as by a silken thread. If he had been less convinced on this point, no doubt he would have abandoned the mortifying struggle, and the parish of Lafton, having whetted its appetite upon him, would have gone freshly to work upon another unhappy young preacher, and crunched his bones with equal satisfaction; and, what is still more important to us, this history would have broken off abruptly short of its fit and necessary period. None of these misfortunes happened, because Colin had at heart a determination to make himself heard, and enter upon his natural vocation, and because, in the second place, he was independent, and did not at the present moment concern himself in the smallest degree abont the stipend of the parish, whether corn was at five pounds the chaldron or five shillings. To be sure, it is contrary to the ordinary habit of biography to represent a young clergyman as entering a parish against the will or with the dislike of the inhabitants; as a general rule it is at worst; an interested curiosity, if not a lively enthusiasm, which the young parish priests of literature find in their village churches; but then it is not England or Arcadia of which we are writing, nor of an ideal curate or spotless primitive vicar, but only of Colin Campbell and the parish of Lafton, in the kingdom of Fife, in the country of Scotland, under the beneficent operation of Lord Aberdeen's Act.

However, at last the undignified combat terminated. After the objections were all disposed of, the seven hundred and fifty communicants received their minister, it is to be hoped, with the respect due to a victor. Perhaps it was a touch of disdain on Colin's part — proving how faulty the young man remained, notwithstanding, as the Mistress said, "all he had come through" — that prompted him to ascend the pulpit, after the struggle was over, with his scarlet hood glaring on his black gown to the consternation of his parishioners. It cannot be denied that this little movement of despite was an action somewhat unworthy of Colin at such a moment and in such a place; but then he was young, and it is difficult for a young man to do under all circumstances exactly what he ought. When he had got there and opened his mouth, Colin forgot all about his scarlet hood — he forgot they had all objected to him and put him in the papers. He saw only before him a certain corner of the world in which he had to perform the highest office that is confided to man. He preached without thinking he was preaching, forgetting all about doctrines, and only remembering the wonderful bewildering life in which every soul before him had its share, the human mysteries and agonies, the heaven, so vague and distant, the need so urgent and so near. In sight of these, which had nothing to do with Lord Aberdeen's Act, Colin forgot that he had been put innocently on his trial and taken to pieces; and what was still more strange, when two or three harmless weeks had passed, the seven hundred and fifty communicants had clean forgotten it too.

CHAPTER XLV.

But, after all, there are few trials to which a man of lofty intentions and an elevated ideal can be exposed, more severe than the entirely unexpected one which comes upon him when he has had his way, and finds himself for the first time in the much-desired position in which he can carry out all the plans of his youth. Perhaps few people arrive so completely at this point as to acknowledge it distinctly to themselves; for, to be sure, human projects and devices have a knack of expanding and undergoing a gradual change from moment to moment. Something of the kind, however, must accompany, for example, every happy marriage; though perhaps it is the woman more than the man who comes under its influence. The beautiful new world of love and goodness into which the happy bride supposes herself to be entering comes to bear after a while so extraordinary a resemblance to the ordinary mediocre world which she has quitted that the young woman stands aghast and bewildered. The happiness which has come has withdrawn a more subtle happiness, that ideal perfection of being to which she has been more or less looking forward all her life. Colin, when he had gone through all his trials, and had fairly reached the point at which the heroic and magnificent existence which he meant to live should commence, found himself very much in the same position. The young man was still in the fantastic age. To preach his sermons every Sunday, and do his necessary duty, and

take advantage of the good society at St. Rule's, did not seem a life sufficient for the new minister. What he had thought of was something impossible, a work for his country, an elevation of the national firmament, an influence which should mellow the rude goodness of Scotland, and link her again to all the solemn past, to all the good and gracious present, to all the tender lights and dawns of hope. Colin had derived from all the religious influences with which he had been brought in contact a character which was perhaps only possible to a young Scotchman and Presbyterian strongly anchored to his hereditary creed, and yet feeling all its practical deficiencies. He was High Church, though he smiled at Apostolic succession; he was Catholic, though the most gorgeous High Mass that ever was celebrated would have moved him no more than one of Verdi's operas. When other enlightened British spectators regarded with lofty superiority the poor papist people coming and going into all the tawdry little churches, and singing vespers horribly out of tune, Colin for his part looked at them with a sigh for his own country, which had ceased to recognise any good in such devotion. And all through his education, from the moment when he smiled at the prayer-book under the curate's arm at Wodensbourne, and wondered what a Scotch peasant would think of it, to the time when he studied in the same light the prelections of the University preacher in St. Mary's, Colin's thought had been, "Would I were in the field." It appeared to him that if he were but there, in all his profusion of strength and youth, he could breathe a new breath into the country he loved. What he meant to do was to untie the horrible bands of logic and knit fair links of devotion around that corner of the universe which it has always seemed possible to Scotsmen to make into a Utopia; to persuade his nation to join hands again with Christendom, to take back again the festivals and memories of Christianity, to rejoice in Christmas and sing lauds at Easter, and say common prayers with a universal voice. These were to be the outward signs; but the fact was that it was a religious revolution in Scotland at which Colin aimed. He meant to dethrone the pragmatic and arrogant preacher, whose reign has lasted so long. He meant to introduce a more humble self-estimate, and a more gracious temper into the world he swayed in imagination. From this dream Colin woke up, after the rude experience of the objectors, to find himself at the head of his seven hundred and fifty communicants, with authority to say anything he liked to them (always limited by the knowledge that they might at any time "libel" him before the presbytery, and that the presbytery might at any time prosecute, judge, and condemn him), and to a certain extent spiritual ruler of the parish, with a right to do anything he liked in it, always subject to the approval of the Session, which could contravent him in many ingenious ways. The young man was at last in the position to which he had looked forward for years — at last his career was begun, and the course of his ambition lay clear before him. Nothing now remained but to realize all these magnificent projects, and carry out his dreams.

But the fact is that Colin, instead of plunging into his great work, stood on the threshold struck dumb and bewildered, much as a bride might do on the threshold of the new home which she had looked forward to as something superior to Paradise. The position of his dreams was obtained, but these dreams had never till now seemed actually hopeless and preposterous. When he took his place up aloft in his high pulpit, from which he regarded his people much as a man at a first-floor window might regard the passers-by below, and watched the ruddy countrymen pouring in with their hats on their heads and a noise like thunder, the first terrible blow was struck at his palace of fancy. They were different altogether from the gaping rustics at Wodensbourne, to whom that good little curate preached harmless sermons out of his low desk, about the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity, and the admirable arrangements of the Church. Colin upstairs at his first-floor window was in no harmless position. He was put up there for a certain business, which the audience down below understood as well as he did. As for prayers and psalm-singing, they were necessary preliminaries to be got over as quickly as possible. The congregation listened and made internal criticisms as the young minister said his prayers. "He's awfu' limited in his confessions," one of the elders whispered to another. "I canna think he's fathomed the nature o' sin, for my part;" and Colin was conscious by something in the atmosphere, by a certain hum and stir, that, though his people were a little grateful to find his first attempt at devotion shorter than usual, a second call upon them was regarded with a certain displeased surprise; for, to be sure, the late minister of Lafton had been of the old school. And then, this inevitable preface having been disposed of, the congregation settled

down quietly to the business of the day. Colin was young, and had kept his youthful awe of the great mysteries of faith, though he was a minster. It struck him with a sort of panic — when he looked down upon all those attentive faces, and recalled to himself the idea that he was expected to teach them, to throw new light upon all manner of doctrines, and open up the Bible, and add additional surety to the assurance already possessed by the audience —that it was a very well-instructed congregation and knew all about the system of Christian theology. It gleamed upon Colin in that terrible moment that, instead of being a predestined reformer, he was a very poor pretender indeed, and totally inadequate to the duties of the post which he had taken upon him thus rashly; for, indeed, he was not by any means so clear as most of his hearers were about the system of theology. This sudden sense of incapacity, which came upon him at the very moment when he ought to have been strongest, was a terrible waking up for Colin. He preached his sermon afterwards, but with pale lips and a heart out of which all the courage seemed to have died for the moment; and betook himself to his manse afterwards to think it all over, with a horrible sense overpowering all his faculties that, after all, he was a sham and impostor, and utterly unworthy of exercising influence upon any reasonable creature. For, to be sure, though a lofty ideal is the best thing in the world, according to its elevation is the pain and misery of the fall.

The consequence was that Colin stopped short in a kind of fright after he had made his first discovery, and that, after all his great projects, nothing in the world was heard all that winter of the young reformer. To return to our metaphor, he was silent as a young wife sometimes finds herself among the relics of her absurd youthful fancies, contemplating the ruin ruefully, and not yet fully awakened to the real possibilities of the position. During this little interval he came gradually down out of his too lofty ideas to consider the actual circumstances. When Lauderdale came to see him, which he did on the occasion of the national new-year holiday, Colin took his friend to see his church with a certain comic despair. "I have a finer chancel than that at Wodensbourne, which was the curate's object in life," said Colin; "but, if I made any fuss about it, I should be set down as an idiot; and, if any man has an imagination sufficiently lively to conceive of your ploughmen entering my church as our poor friends went into the Pantheon"—

"Dinna be unreasonable," said Lauderdale. "You were aye awfu' fantastic in your notions; what should the honest men ken about a chancel? I wouldna say that I'm just clear on the subject mysel'. As for the Pantheon, that was aye an awfu' delusion on your part. Our cathedral at Glasgow is an awfu' deal mair Christian-like than the Pantheon, as far as I can judge; but I wouldna say that it's an idea that ever enters my head to go there for my ain hand to say my prayers; and, as for a country kirk with naked pews and cauld stone" —

"Look at it," said Colin with an air of disgust which was comprehensible enough in a Fellow of Balliol. The church of Lafton was worth looking at. It illustrated with the most wonderful, almost comic, exactness two distinct historic periods. At one end of it was a wonderful Norman chancel, gloomy but magnificent, with its heavy and solemn arches almost as perfect as when they were completed. This chancel had been united to a church of later date (long since demolished) by a lighter and loftier pointed arch, which however, under Colin's incumbency, was filled up with a partition of wood, in which there was a little door giving admission to the church proper, the native and modern expression of ecclesiastical necessities in Scotland. This edifice was like nothing so much as a square box, encircled by a level row of windows high up in the wall, so many on each side; and there it was that Colin's lofty pulpit, up two pairs of stairs, rigidly and nakedly surveyed the rigorous lines of naked pews which traversed the unlovely area. Colin regarded this scene of his labours with a disgust so melancholy, yet so comical, that his companion, though not much given to mirth, gave forth a laugh which rang into the amazed and sombre echoes.

"Yes, it is easy enough to laugh," said Colin, who was not without a sense of the comic side of his position; "but, if it was your own church" —

"Whisht, callant," said Lauderdale, whose amusement was momentary; "if I had ever come to onything in this world, and had a kirk, I wouldna have been so fanciful. It's well for you to get your lesson written out so plain. There's nae place to speak of here for the prayers and the thanksgivings. I'm no saying but what they are the best, but that's no our manner of regarding things in Scotland. Even the man that has mais set his heart on a revolution must aye begin with things as they are. This is no' a place open at a' times to every man that has a word to say to God in quietness, like yon

Catholic chapels. It's a place for preaching; and you maun preach."

"Preach!" said Colin; "what am I to preach? What I have learned here and there, in Dichopftenburg for example, or in the Divinity Hall? and much the better they would all be for that. Besides, I don't believe in preaching, Lauderdale. Preaching never did me the least service. As for that beastly pulpit perched up there, all wood and noise as it is"—but here Colin paused, overcome by the weight of his discontent, and the giddiness natural to his terrible fall.

"Well," said Lauderdale, after a pause, "I'm no saying but what there's some justice in what you say; but I would like to hear, with your ideas, what you're meaning to do."

To which Colin answered with a groan. "Preach," he said gloomily; "there is nothing else I can do: preach them to death, I suppose: preach about everything in heaven and earth; it is all a priest is good for here."

"Ay," said Lauderdale; "and then the worst o't it is that you're no a priest, but only a minister. I wouldna say, however, but what you might pluck up a heart and go into the singing business, and maybe have a process in the presbytery about an organ; that's the form that reformation takes in our kirk, especially with young ministers that have travelled and cultivated their minds, like you. But, Colin," said the philosopher, "you've been in more places than the Divinity Hall. There was once a time when you were awfu' near dying, if a man daur say the truth now it's a' past; and there was once a bit little cham'er out yonder, between heaven and earth."

Out yonder. Lauderdale gave a little jerk with his hand, as he stood at the open door, across the grey, level country which lay between the parish church of Lafton and the sea; and the words and the gesture conveyed Colin suddenly to the lighted window that shone feebly over the campagna, and to the talk within over Meredith's deathbed. The recollection brought a wonderful change over his thoughts. He took his friend's arm in silence, when he had locked the door. "I wonder what *he* is doing," said Colin. "I wonder whether the reality has fallen short of the expectation there. If there should be no golden gates or shining streets as yet, but only another kind of life with other hopes and trials! If one could but know!"

"Ay," said Lauderdale, in a tone that Colin knew so well; and then there was a long pause. "I'm no saying but what it's natural," said the philosopher. "It's aye awfu' hard upon a man to get his ain way; but once in a while there's one arises that can take the good of all that. You'll no make Scotland of your way of thinking, Colin; but you'll make it worth her while to have brought ye forth for a' that. As for Arthur, poor callant, I wouldna say but that his ideal may have changed a wee on the road there. I'm awfu' indifferent to the shining streets for my part; but I'm no indifferent to them that bide yonder in the silence," said Lauderdale, and then he made another pause. "There was one now that wasna in your case," he went on; "*he* was aye pleased to teach in season and out of season. For the sake of the like of him, I'm whiles moved to hope that a's no so awfu' perfect in the other world as we think. I canna see ony ground for it in the Bible. Naething ever comes to an end in this world, callant;—and that was just what I was meaning to ask in respect to other things."

"I don't know what you mean by other things," said Colin; "that is, if you mean Miss Meredith, Lauderdale, I have heard nothing of her for years. That must be concluded to come to have an end if anything ever did. It is not for me to subject myself to rejection any more."

Upon which Lauderdale breathed out a long breath which sounded like a sigh, and was visible as well as audible in the frosty air. "It's aye weel to have your lesson written so plain," he said after a minute with that want of apparent sequence which was sometimes amusing and sometimes irritating to Colin; "it's nae disgrace to a man to do his work under strange conditions. When a lad like you has no place to work in but a pulpit, it's clear to me that God intends him to preach whether he likes it no."

And this was all the comfort Colin received, in the midst of his disenchantment and discouragement, from his dearest friend.

But before the winter was over life had naturally asserted its rights in the minds of the young minister. He had begun to stretch out his hands for his tools almost without knowing it, and to find that after all a man in a pulpit, although he has two flights of stairs to ascend to it, has a certain power in his hand. Colin found eventually, when he opened his eyes, that he had after all a great deal to say, and that even in one hour in a week it was possible to convey sundry new ideas into the rude, but not stupid, minds of his parishioners. A great many of them had that impracticable and hopeless amount of intelligence natural to a

well brought-up Scotch peasant, with opinions upon theological matters and a lofty estimate of his own powers; but withal there were many minds open and thoughtful as silence, and the fields, and much observation of the operations of nature, could make them. True, there were all the disadvantages to be encountered in Lafton which usually exist in Scotch parishes of the present generation. There was a free church at the other end of the parish very well filled, and served by a minister who was much more clear in a doctrinal point of view than Colin; and the heritors, for the most part — that is to say, the land-owners of the parish — though they were pleased to ask a Fellow of Balliol to dinner, and to show him a great deal of attention, yet drove placidly past his church every Sunday to the English chapel in St. Rule's; which is unhappily the general fortune of the National Church in Scotland. It was on this divided world that Colin looked from his high pulpit, where, at least for his hour, he had the privilege of saying what he pleased without any contradiction; and it is not to be denied that after a while the kingdom of Fife grew conscious to its extremity that in the eastern corner a man had arrived who had undoubtedly something to say. As his popularity began to rise, Colin's ambitions crept back to his heart one by one. He preached the strangest sort of baffling, unorthodox sermons, in which, however, when an adverse critic took notes, there was found to be nothing upon which in these days he could be brought to the bar of the presbytery. Thirty years ago, indeed, matters were otherwise regulated; but even presbyteries have this advantage over popes, that they do take a step forward occasionally to keep in time with their age.

This would be the proper point at which to leave Colin, if there did not exist certain natural, human prejudices on the subject which require a distinct conclusion of one kind or another. Until a man is dead, it is impossible to say what he has done, or to make any real estimate of his work; and Colin, so far from being dead, is only as yet at the commencement of his career, having taken the first steps with some success and *éclat*, and having recovered the greater part of his enthusiasm. There was, indeed, a time when his friends expected nothing else for him than that early and lovely ending which makes a biography perfect. There is only one other ending in life, which is equally satisfactory, and, at least on the face of it, more cheerful than dying; and that, we need not say, is marriage. Accordingly, as it is impossible to pursue his course to the one end, all that we can do is to turn to the other, which, though the hero himself was not aware of it, was at that moment shadowing slowly out of the morning clouds.

It is accordingly with a feeling of relief that we turn from the little ecclesiastical world of Scotland, where we dare not put ourselves in too rigorous contact with reality, or reveal indiscreetly, without regard to the sanctity of individual confidence, what Colin is doing, to the common open air and daylight, in which he set out, all innocent and unfearing, on a summer morning, accompanied as of old by Lauderdale, upon a holiday voyage. He had not the remotest idea, any more than the readers of his history have at this moment, what was to happen to him before he came back again. He set out with all his revolutionary ideas in his mind, without pausing to think that circumstances might occur which would soften down all insurrectionary impulses on his part, and present him to the alarmed Church, not under the aspect of an irresistible agitator and reformer, but in the subdued character of a man who has given hostages to society. Colin had no thought of this downfall in his imagination when he set out. He had even amused himself with the idea of a new series of "Tracts for the Times," which might peradventure work as much commotion in the Church of Scotland as the former series had done in the Anglican communion. He went off in full force and energy with the draft of the first of these revolutionary documents in the writing-case in which he had once copied out his verses for Alice Meredith. Poor Alice Meredith! The bridle which Colin had once felt on his neck had worn by this time to such an impalpable thread that he was no longer aware of its existence; and even the woman in the clouds had passed out of his recollection for the moment, so much was he absorbed with the great work he had embarked on. Thus he set out on a pedestrian excursion, meaning to go to the English lakes, and it is hard to say where besides, in his month's holiday; and nothing in the air or in the skies gave any notice to Colin of the great event that was to befall him before he could return.

PART XVI.

CHAPTER XLVI.

It was, as we have said, a lovely summer morning when Colin set out on his excursion, after the fatigues of the winter and spring. His first stage was naturally Ramore, where he arrived the same evening, having picked up Lauderdale at Glasgow on his way. A more beautiful evening had never shone over the Holy Loch; and, as the two friends approached Ramore, all the western sky was flaming behind the dark hills, which stood up in austere shadow, shutting out from the Loch and its immediate banks the later glories of the sunset. To leave the eastern shore, where the light still lingered, and steal up under the shadow into the soft beginning of the twilight, with Ramore, that "shines where it stands," looking out hospitably from the brae, was like leaving the world of noise and commotion for the primitive life, with its silence and its thoughts; and so, indeed, Colin felt it, though his world was but another country parish, primitive enough in its ways. But then it must not be forgotten that there is a difference between the kingdom of Fife, where wheat grows golden on the broad fields, and where the herrings come up to the shore to be salted and packed in barrels, and the sweet Loch half hidden among the hills, where the cornfields are scant and few, and where grouse and heather divide the country with the beasts and the pastures, and where, in short, Gaelic was spoken within the memory of man. Perhaps there was something of the vanity of youth in that look of observation and half amused, half curious criticism which the young man cast upon the peaceful manse, where the minister, who had red hair, had painfully begun his career when Colin himself was a boy. It was hard to believe that anything ever could happen in that calm house, thus reposing among its trees, with only a lawn between it and the church, and looking as peaceful and retired and silent as the church itself did. It is true Colin knew very well that things both bitter and joyful had happened there within his own recollection; but that did not prevent the thought striking him, as he glided past in the little bustling steamer, which somehow, by the contrast, gave a more absolute stillness to the pretty rural landscape. Perhaps the minister was walking out at that moment, taking his peaceful stroll along the dewy road, — a man whose life was all fixed and settled long ago, to whom nothing could ever happen in his own person, and whose life consisted in a repetition over and over of the same things, the same thoughts, pretty nearly the same words. To be sure, he had a wife, and children, and domestic happiness; but Colin, at his time of life, made but a secondary account of that. He looked at the manse accordingly with a smile as he passed on out of sight. The manse of Lafton was not nearly so lovely, but — it was different; though perhaps he could not have told how. And the same thought was in his mind as he went on past all the tranquil houses. How did they manage to keep existing, those people for whom life was over, who had ceased to look beyond the day, or to anticipate either good or evil? To be sure this was very unreasonable musing; for Colin was aware that things did happen now and then on the Holy Loch. Somebody died occasionally, when it was impossible to help it, and by turns somebody was born, and there even occurred, at rare intervals, a marriage, with its suggestion of life beginning; but these domestic incidents were not what he was thinking of. Life seemed to be in its quiet evening over all that twilight coast; and then it was the morning with Colin, and it did not seem possible for him to exist without the hopes, and motives, and excitements which made ceaseless movement and commotion in his soul. To be sure, he too was only a country minister, and was expected to live and die among "his people" as peaceably as his prototype was doing on the Holy Loch; and this thought somehow it was that, falling into his mind like a humorous suggestion, made Colin smile; for his ideas did not take that peaceful turn at this period of his existence. He was so full of what had to be done, even of what he himself had to do, that the silence seemed to recede before him, and to rustle and murmur round him as he carried into it his conscious and restless life. He had even such a wealth of existence to dispose of that it kept flowing on in two or three distinct channels, a thing which amused him when he thought of it. For underneath all this sense of contrast, and Lauderdale's talk, and his own watch for the Ramore boat, and his mother at the door, No. 1 of the *Tracts for the Times* was at the same time shaping itself in Colin's brain; and there are moments when a man can stand apart from himself, and note what is going on in his own mind. He was talking to Lauderdale, and greeting the old friends who recognised him in the boat, and looking out for home, and planning his tract, and making that contrast between the evening and the morning all at the same moment.

And at the same time he had taken off the front of his mental habitation, and was looking at all those different processes going on in its different compartments with a curious sense of amusement. Such were the occupations of his mind as he went up to the Loch, to that spot where the Ramore boat lay waiting on the rippled surface. It was a different homecoming from any that he had ever made before. Formerly his prospects were vague, and it never was quite certain what he might make of himself. Now he had fulfilled all the ambitions of his family, as far as his position went. There was nothing more to hope for or to desire in that particular; and, naturally, Colin felt that his influence with his father and brothers at least would be enhanced by the realization of those hopes, which, up to this time, had always been mingled with a little uncertainty. He forgot all about that when he grasped the hands of Archie and of the farmer, and dashed up the brae to where the Mistress stood wistful at the door; but, notwithstanding, there was a difference, and it was one which was sufficiently apparent to all. As for his mother, she smoothed down the sleeve of his black coat with her kind hand, and examined with a tender smile the cut of the waistcoat which Colin had brought from Oxford — though, to tell the truth, he had still a stolen inclination for "mufti," and wore his uniform only when a solemn occasion occurred like this, and on grand parade; but, for all her joy and satisfaction at sight of him, the Mistress still looked a little shattered and broken, and had never forgotten — though Colin had forgotten it long ago — the "objections" of the parish of Lafton, and all that her son had had "to come through," as she said, "before he was placed."

"I suppose a's weel now?" Mrs. Campbell said. "No that I could have any doubts in my own mind, so far as you were concerned; but, the mair experience a person has, the less hope they have in other folk — though that's an awfu' thing to say, and gangs against Scripture. Me that thought there was not a living man that could say a word of blame to my Colin! And to think of a' the lees that were invented. His father there says it's a necessary evil, and that we maun have popular rights; but for me I canna see the necessity. I'm no for doing evil that good may come," said the Mistress; "it's awfu' papistry that — and to worry a poor callant to death, and drive a' that belongs to him out o' their wits — "

"He's not dead yet," said the farmer, "nor me out of my ordinary. I'll not say it's pleasant; but so long as they canna allege onything against a man's morality I'm no so much heeding; and it's a poor kind of thing to be put in by a patron that doesna care a pin, and gangs to another kirk."

"I'm awfu' shaken in my mind about that," said the Mistress; "there's the Free Kirk folk — though I'm no for making an example of them — fighting among themselves about their new minister, like thae puir senseless creatures in America. Thamas, at the Mill-head, is for the ane candidate, and his brother Dugald for the tither; and they're like to tear each other's een out when they meet. That's ill enough, but Lafton's waur. I'm no for setting up priests, nor making them a sacerdotal caste as some folk say; but will you tell me," said Mrs. Campbell, indignantly, "that a wheen ignorant weavers and canailye like that can judge my Colin? ay, or even if it was thae Fife farmers driving in their gigs. I would like to ken what he studied for and took a' thae honours, and gave baith time and siller, if he wasna to ken better than the like of them. I'm no pretending to meddle with politics that are out of my way — but I canna shut my een," the Mistress said, emphatically. "The awfu' business is that we've nae respect to speak of for onything but ourselves; we're so awfu' fond of our ain bit poor opinions, and the little we ken. If there was ony chance in our parish — and the minister's far from weel, by a' I can hear — and that man round the point at the English chapel was na such an awfu' haveril — I would be tempted to flee away out of their fechts and their objections, and get a quiet Sabbath-day there."

"I'm no for buying peace so dear, for my part," said Lauderdale; "they're terrible haverils, most of the English ministers in our pairts, as the Mistress says. We're a' in a kind of dissenting way now-a-days, the mair's the pity. Whisht a moment, callant, and let a man speak. — I'm no saying onything against dissent; it's a wee hard in its ways, and it has an awfu' opinion of itsel', and there's nae beauty in it that it should be desired; but, when your mind's made up to have popular rights and your ain way in everything, I canna see onything else for it, for my part. It's pure democracy — that's what it is — and democracy means naething else, as far as I'm informed, but the reign of them that kens the least and skreighs the loudest. It's no a bonnie spectacle, but I'm no a man that demands beauty under a' conditions. Our friend the curate yonder," said Lauderdale, pointing his finger vaguely over his shoulder to indicate Wodensbourne,

"was awfu' taken up about his auld arches and monuments — that's what you ca' the chancel, I suppose; but as for our young minister here, though he's just as caring about thae vanities, it's a' filled up with good deal boards and put behind his back like a hidie-hole. There's something awfu' instructive in that; for I wouldna say that the comparison was ony way in the curate's favour," said the philosopher, with a gleam of suppressed pride and tenderness, "if you were to turn your een to the pulpit and take your choice of the men."

Mrs. Campbell lifted her eyes to her son's face and regarded him solemnly as Lauderdale spoke; but she could not escape the influence of the recollection that even Colin had been objected to. "Nae doubt the like of him in a kirk should make a difference," she said with candour, yet melancholy, "but I dinna see what's to be the end of it for my part — a change for good is aye awfu' slow to work, and I'll no live to see the new days."

"You'll live to see all I am good for, mother," said Colin; "and it appears to me you are all a set of heretics and schismatics. Lauderdale is past talking to, but I expected something better of you."

"Weel, we'll a' see," said big Colin, who in his heart could not defend an order of ecclesiastical economy which permitted his son to be assaulted by the parish of Lafton, or any other parish, "if it's the will of God. We're none of us so awfu' auld; but the world's aye near its ending to a woman that sees her son slighted; there's nae penitence can make up for that — no that he's suffered much that I can see," the farmer said with a laugh. "That's enough of the Kirk for one night."

"Eh, Colin, dinna be so worldly," said his wife; "I think whiles it would be an awfu' blessing if the world was to end as some folk think; and a' thing cleared up, and them joined again that had been parted, and the bonnie earth safe through the fire — if it's to be by fire," she added with a questioning glance towards her son; "I canna think but it's ower good to be true. When I mind upon a' we've to go through in this life, and a' that is so hard to mend; eh, if He would but take it in His ain hand!" said the Mistress with tears in her eyes. No one was so hard-hearted as to preach to her at that moment, or to enlarge upon the fact that everything was in His hand, as indeed she knew as well as her companions; but it happens sometimes that the prayers and the wishes which are out of reason, are those that come warmest, and touch deepest to the heart.

But, meanwhile, and attending the end of the world, Colin, when he was settled for the night in his old room, with its shelving roof, took out and elaborated his *Tract for the Times*. It was discontent as great as that of his mother's which breathed out of it; but then hers was the discontent of a life which had nothing new to do or to look for, and which had found out by experience how little progress can be made in a lifetime, and how difficult it is to change evil into good. Colin's discontent, on the contrary, was that exhilarating sentiment which stimulates youth, and opens up an endless field of combat and conquest. At his end of the road it looked only natural that the obstacles should move of themselves out of the way, and that which was just and best should have the inevitable victory. When he had done, he thought with a tenderness which brought tears to his eyes, yet at the same moment a smile to his lips, of the woman's impatience that would hasten the wheels of fate, and call upon God to take matters, as she said, in his own hand. That did not, as yet, seem a step necessary to Colin. He thought there was still time to work by the natural means, and that things were not arrived at such a pass that it was needful to appeal to miracle. It could only be when human means had failed that such a resource could be necessary; and the human means had certainly not failed entirely so long as he stood there in the bloom of his young strength, with his weapons in his hand.

He preached in his native church on the following Sunday, as was to be expected; and from up the Loch and down the Loch all the world came to hear young Colin of Ramore. And Colin the farmer, the elder, sat glorious at the end of his pew, and in the pride of his heart listened, and noted, and made inexorable criticisms, and commented on his son's novel ideas with a severe irony which it was difficult to understand in its true sense. The Duke himself came to hear Colin's sermon, which was a wonderful honour for the young man, and all the parish critizised him with a zest which it was exhilarating to hear. "I mind when he couldna say his Questions," said Evan of Barnton; "I wouldna like to come under ony engagement that he kens them noo. He was aye a callant awfu' fond of his ain opinion, and for my part I'm no for Presbyteries, passing ower objections so easy. Either he's of Jowett's school or he's no; but I never saw that there was ony right decision come to. There

were some awfu' suspicious expressions under his second head—if you could ca' yon a head," said the spiritual ruler, with natural contempt; for indeed Colin's divisions were not what they ought to have been, and he was perfectly open to criticism so far as that was concerned.

"A lot of that was out of Maurice," said another thoughtful spectator. "I'm aye doubtful of thae misty phrases. If it wasna for hurting a' their feelings I would be awfu' tempted to say a word. He's no' that auld, and he might mend.

"He'll never mend," said Evan. "I'm no one that ever approved of the upbringing of these laddies. They have ower much opinion of themselves. There's Archie, that thinks he knows the price of cattle better than a man of twice his age. She's an awfu' fanciful woman, that mother of theirs — and then they've a' been a wee spoiled with that business about the English callant; but I'll no say but what he has abilities," the critic added, with a national sense of clanship. The parish might not approve of the upbringing of the young Campbells, nor of their opinions, but still it had a national share in any reputation that the family or any of its members might attain.

Colin continued his course on the Monday with his friend. He had stayed but a few days at home, but it was enough, and all the party were sensible of the fact. Henceforward that home, precious as it was, could not count for much in his life. It was a hard thing to think of, but it was a necessity of nature. Archie and the younger sons greeted with enthusiasm the elder brother, who shared with them his better fortunes and higher place; but, when the greeting was given on both sides, there did not remain very much to say; for, to be sure, seen by Colin's side, the young Campbells, still *gauche*, and shamefaced, and with the pride of a Scotch peasant in arms, looked inferior to what they really were, and felt so — and the mother felt it for them, though Colin was her own immediate heir and the pride of her heart. She bade him farewell with suppressed tears, and a sense of loss which was not to be suppressed. "He has his ain hame, and his ain place, and little need of us now, the Lord be praised," the Mistress said to herself as she watched him going down to the boat; "I think I would be real content if he had but a good wife." But still it was with a sigh that she went in again and closed the door upon the departing boat that carried her son back to the world.

CHAPTER XLVII.

As for Colin and his friend, they went upon their way steadily, with that rare sympathy in difference which is the closest bond of friendship. Lauderdale by this time had lost all the lingerings of youth which had hung long about him, perhaps by right of his union with the fresh and exuberant youth of his brother-in-arms. His gaunt person was gaunter than ever, though, by an impulse of the tenderest pride — not for himself but for his companion — his dress fitted him better, and was more carefully put on than it had ever been during all his life; but his long hair, once so black and wild, was now gray, and hung in thin locks, and his beard, that relic of Italy, which Lauderdale preserved religiously, and had ceased to be ashamed of, was gray also, and added to the somewhat solemn aspect of his long thoughtful face. He was still an inch or two taller than Colin, whose great waves of brown hair, tossed up like clouds upon his forehead, and shining brown eyes, which even now had not quite lost the soft shade of surprise and admiration which had given them such a charm in their earlier years, contrasted strangely with the worn looks of his friend. They were not like father and son, for Lauderdale preserved in his appearance an indefinable air of solitude and of a life apart, which made it impossible to think of him in any such relationship; but perhaps their union was more close and real than even that tie could have made it, since the unwedded childless man was at once young and old, and had kept in his heart a virgin freshness more visionary, and perhaps even more spotless, than that of Colin's untarnished youth — for, to be sure, the young man not only was conscious of that visionary woman in the clouds, but had already solaced himself with more than one love, and still meant to marry a wife like other men, though that was not at present the foremost idea in his mind; whereas whatever love Lauderdale might have had in that past from which he never drew the veil, it had never been replaced by another, nor involved any earthly hope. This made him naturally more sympathetic than a man who had gone through all the ordinary experiences of life could have been; and at the same time it made him more intolerant of what he supposed to be Colin's inconstancy. As they crossed the borders, and found themselves among the Cumberland hills, Lauderdale approached nearer and nearer to that subject which had been for so long a time left in silence between them.

Perhaps it required that refinement of ear natural to a born citizen of Glasgow to recognize that it was "English" which was being spoken round them as they advanced — but the philosopher supposed himself to have made that discovery. He recurred to it with a certain pathetic meaning as they went upon their way. They had set out on foot from Carlisle, each with his knapsack, to make their leisurely way to the Lakes; and, when they rested and dined in the humble roadside inn which served for their first resting-place, the plaintive cadence of his friend's voice struck Colin with a certain amusement. "They're a' English here," Lauderdale said, with a tone of sad recollection, as a man might have said in Norway or Russia, hearing for the first time the foreign tongue, and bethinking himself of all the dreary seas and long tracts of country that lay between him and home. It might have been pathetic under such circumstances, though the chances are that even then Colin, graceless and fearless, would have laughed; but at present, when the absence was only half a day's march, and the difference of tongue, as we have said, only to be distinguished by an ear fine and native, the sigh was too absurd to be passed over lightly. "I never knew you have the *mal du pays* before," Colin said with a burst of laughter: — and the patriot himself did not refuse to smile.

"Speak English," he said, with a quaint self-contradiction, "though I should say speak Scotch if I was consistent; — you needna make your jokes at me. Oh ay, it's awfu' easy laughing. It's no *that* I'm thinking of; there's nothing out of the way in the association of ideas this time, though they play bonnie pranks whiles. I'm thinking of the first time I was in England, and how awfu' queer it sounded to hear the bits of callants on the road, and the poor bodies at the cottage doors."

"The first time you were in England — that was when you came to nurse me like a good fellow as you are," said Colin; "I should have died that time but for my mother and you."

"I'm not saying that," said Lauderdale; "you're one of the kind that's awfu' hard to kill — a dour callant like you would have come through a' the same; but it's no that I'm thinking of. There are other things that come to my mind with the sound of the English tongue. Hold your peace, callant, and listen; is there nothing comes back to you, will you tell me, when you hear the like of *that?*"

"I hear a woman talking in very broad Cumberland," said Colin, who notwithstanding began to feel an uncomfortable heat mounting upwards in his face; "you may call it English, if you have a mind. There is some imperceptible difference between that and the Dumfriesshire, I suppose; but I should not like to have to discriminate where the difference lies."

As for Lauderdale, he sighed; but without intending it, as it appeared, for he made a great effort to cover his sigh by a yawn, for which latter indulgence he had evidently no occasion, and then he tried a faint little unnecessary laugh, which sat still more strangely on him. "I'm an awfu' man for associations," he said; "I'm no to be held to ony account for the things that come into my head. You may say it's Cumberland, and I'm no disputing; but for a' that there's something in the sound of the voice ——"

"Look here," said Colin impatiently; "listen to my tract. I want you to give me your opinion now it is finished; turn this way, with your face to the hills, and never mind the voice."

"Oh ay," said Lauderdale, with another sigh; "there's nae voice like his ain voice to this callant's ear; it's an awfu' thing to be an author, and above a' a reformer; for you may be sure it's for the sake of the cause, and no because he's written a' that himself. Let's hear this grand tract of yours; no that I've any particular faith in that way of working," the philosopher added slowly, settling into his usual mode of talk, without consideration of his companion's impatience; "a book, or a poem, or a tract, or whatever it may be, is no good in this world without an audience. Any man can write a book; that's to say, most men could if they would but take the trouble to try; but, as for the audience, that's different. If it doesna come by nature, I see nae way of manufacturing that; but I'm no objecting to hear what you have got to say," Lauderdale added impartially. It was not encouraging perhaps to the young author; but Colin was sufficiently used by this time to his friend's prelections, and for his own part was very well pleased to escape from memories more perplexing and difficult to manage. It was with this intention that he had taken out No. I. of the *Tracts for the Times*. If any of the writers of the original series of these renowned compositions could but have looked over the shoulder of the young Scotch minister, and beheld the different fashion of thoughts, the curious fundamental difference which lay underneath, and yet the

apparent similarity of intention on the face of it! Rome and the Pope were about as far off as Mecca and the prophet from Colin's ideas. He was not in the least urgent for any infallible standard, nor at all concerned to trace a direct line of descent for himself or his Church; and yet withal his notions were as high and absolute and arbitrary on some points as if he had been a member of the most potent of hierarchies — though this might perhaps be set down to the score of his youth. It would, however, be doing Colin injustice to reproduce here this revolutionary document: to tell the truth, circumstances occurred very soon after to retard the continuation of the series, and, so far as his historian is aware, the publication of this preliminary * address was only partial. For, to be sure, the young man had still abundance of time before him, and the first and the most important thing, as Lauderdale had suggested, was the preparation of the audience — an object which was on the whole better carried out by partial and private circulation than by coming prematurely before the public, and giving the adversary occasion to blaspheme, and perhaps frightening the Kirk herself out of her wits. Having said so much, we may return to the more private and individual aspect of affairs. The two friends were seated, while all this was going on, out of doors, on a stone bench by the gray wall of the cottage inn, in which they had just refreshed themselves with a nondescript meal. The Cumberland hills — at that moment bleaching under the sunshine, showing all their scars and stains in the fullness of the light — stretched far away into the distance, hiding religiously in their depths the sacred woods and waters that were the end of the pilgrimage on which the two friends were bound. Lauderdale sat at leisure and listened, shading the sunshine from his face, and watching the shadows play on the woods and hills; and the same force of imagination which persuaded the unaccustomed traveller that he could detect a difference of tone in the rude talk he heard in the distance, and that that which was only Cumberland was *English*, persuaded him also that the sunshine in which he was sitting was warmer than the sunshine at home, and that he was really, as he himself would have described it, "going south." He was vaguely following out these ideas, notwithstanding that he also listened to Colin, and gave him the fullest attention. Lauderdale had not travelled much in his life, nor enjoyed many holidays; and, consequently, the very sense of leisure and novelty recalled to him the one great recreation of his life — the spring he had spent in Italy, with all its vicissitudes, prefaced by the mournful days at Wodensbourne. All this came before Lauderdale's mind more strongly a great deal than it did before that of Colin, because it was to the elder man the one sole and clearly marked escape out of the monotony of a long life — a thing that had occurred but once, and never could occur again. How the Cumberland hills, and the peasant voices in their rude dialect, and the rough stone bench outside the door of a gray lime-stone cottage, could recall to Lauderdale the olive slopes of Frascati, the tall houses shut up and guarded against the sunshine, and the far-off solemn waste of the Campagna, would have been something unintelligible to Colin. But in the meantime these recollections were coming to a climax in his companion's mind. He gave a great start in the midst of Colin's most eloquent paragraph, and jumped to his feet, crying, "Do you hear that?" with a thrill of excitement utterly inexplicable to the astonished young man; and then Lauderdale grew suddenly ashamed of himself, and took his seat again, abashed, and felt that it was needful to explain.

"Do I hear what?" said Colin; and, as this interruption occurred just at the moment when he supposed he had roused his hearer to a certain pitch of excitement and anxiety, by his account of the religious deficiencies of Scotland, which he was on the point of relieving by an able exposition of the possibilities of reform, it may be forgiven to him if he spoke with a little asperity. Such a disappointment is a trying experience for the best of men. "What is it, for Heaven's sake?" said the young man, forgetting he was a minister; and, to tell the truth, Lauderdale was so much ashamed of himself that he felt almost unable to explain.

"She's singing something, that's a'," said the confused philosopher. "I'm an awfu' haveril, Colin. There's some things I canna get out of my head. Never you mind; a' that's admirable," said the culprit, with a certain deprecatory eagerness. "I'm awfu' anxious to see how you get us out of the scrape. Go on."

Colin was angry, but he was human, and he could not but laugh at the discomfiture and conciliatory devices of his disarmed

* Numbers I. and II. of the Scotch *Tracts for the Times*, together with fragments of subsequent numbers uncompleted, will be given, if desired by Colin's friends, in the appendix to the second edition of this biography.

critic. "I am not going to throw away my pearls," he said; "since your mind is in such a deplorable state you shall hear no more to-day. Oh, no. I understand the extent of your anxiety. And so here's Lauderdale going the way of all flesh. Who is *she?* and what is she singing? The best policy is to make a clean breast of it," said the young man, laughing; "and then, perhaps, I may look over the insult you have been guilty of to myself."

But Lauderdale was in no mood for laughing. "I'm not sure that it wouldna be the best plan to go on," he said; "for notwithstanding, I've been giving my best attention; and maybe if I was to speak out what was in my heart——"

"Speak it out," said Colin. He was a little affronted, but he kept his composure. As he folded up his papers and put them away in his pocket-book, he too heard the song which Lauderdale had been listening to. It was only a country-woman singing as she went about her work, and there was no marked resemblance in either the voice or the song to anything he had heard before. All that could be said was that the voice was young and fresh, and that the melody was sad, and had the quality of suggestiveness, which is often wanting to more elaborate music. He knew what was coming when he put up his papers in his pocket-book, and it occurred to him that perhaps it would be well to have the explanation over and be done with it, for he knew how persistent his companion was.

"It's no that there's much to say," said Lauderdale, changing his tone; "a man like me, that's little used to change, gets awfu' like a fool in his associations. There's naething that ony reasonable creature could see in thae hills, and a' the sheep on them, that should bring *that* to my mind; and, as you say, callant, it's Cumberland they're a' speaking, and no English. It's just a kind of folly that men are subject to that live their lane. I canna but go a' through again, from the beginning to—— Well, I suppose," said Lauderdale with a sigh, "what you and me would call the end."

"What any man in his senses would call the end," said Colin, beginning to cut his pencil with some ferocity, which was the only occupation that occurred to him for the moment; "I don't suppose there can be any question as to what you mean. Was it to be expected that I would court rejection over again for the mere pleasure of being rejected?—as you know I have been, both by letter and in person; and then, as if even that was not enough, accused of fortune-hunting; when Heaven knows——" Here Colin stopped short, and cut his pencil so violently that he cut his finger, which was an act which convicted him of using unnecessary force, and of which accordingly, he was ashamed.

"It is no *that* I was thinking of," said Lauderdale; "I was minding of the time when we a' met, and the bit soft English voice. It's no that I'm fond of the English, or their ways," continued the philosopher. "We're maybe no so well in our ain country, and maybe we're better; I'll no say. It's a question awfu' hard to settle. But, if ever we a' foregather again, I cannot think there will be that difference. It wasna to say musical that I ken of, but it was aye soft and pleasant—maybe ower soft, Colin, for the like of you—and with a bit of yielding tone in it, as if the heart would break sooner than make a stand for its own way. I mind it real weel," said Lauderdale, with a sigh. "As for the father, no doubt there was little to be said in his favour. But, after a', it wasna him that you had any intention to marry. And yon Sabbath-day after *he* was gone, poor man!—when you and me didna ken what to do with ourselves till the soft thing came out of her painted cha'amer, and took the guiding of us into her hands. It's *that* I was thinking of," said Lauderdale, fixing his eyes on a far off point upon the hills, and ending his musing with a sigh.

Colin sighed, too, for sympathy—he could not help it. The scene came before him as his friend spoke. He thought he could see Alice, in her pallor and exhaustion, worn to a soft shadow, in her black dress, coming into the bare Italian room in the glorious summer day, which all the precautions possible could not shut out from the house of mourning—with her prayer-book in her hand; and then he remembered how she had chidden him for reading another lesson than that appointed for the day. It was in the height of his own revolutionary impulses that this thought struck him; and he smiled to himself in the midst of his sigh, with a tender thought for Alice, and a passing wonder for himself, what change might have been wrought upon him if that dutiful little soul had actually become the companion of his life. Colin was not the kind of man who can propose to himself to form his wife's mind, and rule her thoughts, and influence her without being sensible of her influence in return. That was not the order of domestic affairs in Ramore; and naturally he judged the life that might have been, and even yet

might be, by that standard. The Mistress's son did not understand having a nullity, or a shadow of himself, for a wife; and insensibly he made his way back from the *attendrissement* into which Lauderdale's musings had led him, into half-amused speculation as to the effect Alice and her influence might have had upon him by this time. "If *that* had happened," he said with a smile, bursting out, as was usual to him when Lauderdale was his companion, at that particular point of his thoughts which required expression, without troubling himself to explain how he came there — "if *that* had happened," said Colin, with the conscious smile of old, "I wonder what sort of fellow I should have been by this time? I doubt if I should have had any idea of disturbing the constituted order of affairs. Things are always for the best, you perceive, as everybody says. A man who has any revolutionary work to do must be free and alone. But don't let us talk any more of that — I don't like turning back upon the road. But for that feeling I should have settled the business before now about poor Arthur's 'Voice from the Grave.'"

"I was aye against that title," said Lauderdale, "if he would have paid any attention; but you're a' the same, you young callants; it's nae more a voice from the grave than mine is. It's a voice from an awfu' real life, that had nae intention to lose a minute that was permitted. It would be something, to be sure that he was kept informed, and had a pleasure in his book; but then, so far as I can judge, he maun ken an awfu' deal better by this time — and maybe up there they're no heeding about a third edition. It's hard to say; he was so terrible like himself up to the last moment; I canna imagine, in my own mind, that he's no like himself still. There should be a heap of siller," said Lauderdale, "by this time; and sooner or later you'll have to open communication, and let them ken."

"Yes," said Colin, with a momentary look of sullenness and repugnance; and then he added, in a lighter tone, "heaps of money never came out of a religious publisher's hand. A third edition does not mean the same thing with them as with other people. Of course, it must be set right some time or other. We had better set off, I can tell you, and not talk idle talk like this, if we mean to get to our journey's end to-night."

"Oh, ay," said Lauderdale, "you're aye in a hurry, you young callants. As for me, I've aye found time to finish what I was about. Is it the father that makes you so unwilling for any correspondence? — but it's awfu' easy to settle a thing like that."

"I think you want to try how far my patience can go," said Colin, who had grown crimson up to the hair. "Do you think a man has no feeling, Lauderdale? Do you think it is possible to be treated as I have been, and yet go back again with humility, hat in hand? I don't feel myself capable of that."

"If you're asking me my opinion," said Lauderdale, calmly, "I've nae objection to tell you what I think. You're no vindictive, and you've nae pride to speak of — I'm meaning pride of *that* kind. It's no in you to bear a grudge at onybody beyond, maybe, the hour or the day. So I'm no heeding much about that question, for my part. If you had an awfu' regard for the man, he might affront you; but no being indifferent. I'm telling you just my opinion, with my partial knowledge of the premises — but for *her*, I cannot but say what is in my ain mind. I've a kind of longing to see her again; we used to be awfu' good friends, her and me. I had you to take care of, callant, and she had *him;* and whiles she had a moment of envy, and grudged terrible in her heart to see the air and the sun, that are for baith the good and the evil, so hard upon him, and so sweet to you; there was little in her mind to hide, and her and me were good friends. I'll never forget our counts and our reckonings. It's awfu' hard for the like o' me to divine wherefore it is that a' that has come to an end, and her and you dropped out of one another's life."

"Lauderdale," said Colin, with a little choking in his voice, "I will tell you what I never told you before ——" and then the young man stopped short, as if he had received a blow. What was it that came over him like an imperious sudden prohibition, stopping the words upon his lips the first time he had ever dreamt of uttering them to mortal ear? He had a feeling somehow as if one of those flying shadows that kept coming and going over the mountains had taken another shape and come before him, and put a cold hand on his lips. He was about to have confessed that his love had been no more than tender compassion and kindness; he was about to have said what Lauderdale might have guessed before, what Colin had kept secret and hidden in his breast — that Alice never was nor could be the ideal woman of his thoughts, the true love, who waited for him somewhere in the future. But perhaps, after all, it was no shadow nor unseen influence, but only the young man's magnanimous heart that spared

that humiliation to the name of Alice — solely to her name; for, now that all was over between them, it was only that abstract representation of her that was concerned.

"Ay," said Lauderdale, after a moment, "you were going to tell me ——" and then he rose as Colin had done, and threw his knapsack on his shoulder, and prepared to resume his march.

"We shall have an hour's walking in the dark, if we don't make all the better progress," said Colin; "which is uncomfortable when one does not know the way. And now to return to No. I." he said with a laugh, as they went on along the dusty road. There was not another word said between them of the confession thus abruptly stopped. Perhaps Lauderdale in his heart had a perception of what it meant; but, however that might be, both fell at once with eagerness, as if they had never digressed for a moment, upon the first number of Colin's *Tracts for the Times*.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

This conversation, however, as was natural, had a certain effect upon both the friends. It threw Colin, who, to be sure, was chiefly concerned, into a world of confused imaginations, which influenced even his dreams, and through his dreams reacted upon himself. When he was alone at night, instead of going to sleep at once, as would have been natural after his day's journey, he kept falling into absurd little dozes and waking up suddenly with the idea that Alice was standing by him, that she was calling him, that it was the marriage-day, and that somebody had found him out, and was about to tell his bride that he did not love her; and at last, when he went to sleep in good earnest, the fantastic *mêlange* of recollection and imagination carried him back to Frascati, where he found Arthur and Alice, as of old, in the great *salone*, with its frescoed walls, and talked to them as in the former days. He thought Meredith told him of an important journey upon which he was setting out, and made arrangements in the meantime for his sister with an anxiety which the real Arthur had never dreamt of exhibiting. "She will be safe with you at present," the visionary Arthur seemed to say, "and by-and-by you will send her to me ——" And when Colin woke it was hard for him to convince himself at first that he had not been in actual communication with his friend. He accounted for it, of course, as it is very easy to account for dreams, and convinced himself, and yet left behind in some crevice of his heart a dumb consciousness which hid itself out of sight that it might not be argued with, that after all Arthur and he in the dark had passed by each other, and exchanged a word or thought in passing. Colin took care not to betray even to himself the existence of this conviction; but deep down in the silence it influenced him unawares. As for Lauderdale, his thoughts, as might have been expected, had taken another direction. Perhaps he was past the age of dreaming. Colin's revelation which he did not make had possibly told his friend more than if it had been said out in words; and all the thoughts of the elder man had fixed upon the strange problem which has been discussed so often with so little result — how there are some people who can have love for the asking, and reject it, and how there are some who would die for that dear consolation, to whom it does not come. To be sure, he was not philosophical on this subject, and the chances are that he attributed to Alice feelings much deeper and more serious than any that had actually moved her. The chances were, indeed, for all that Lauderdale knew, that she had accepted her position, as Colin thought, dutifully, and obeyed her father, and ceased to think anything about the romantic projects and strange companionship of their Italian life. But the friend was more faithful than the lover, and had a more elevated idea of Alice, and her capabilities; and he took to talking in his vague way, hovering round the subject in wide circles, now and then swooping down for a moment on some point that approached, as closely as he thought it right to approach, to the real centre of his thoughts.

"Thae great hills are awfu' in the way," said Lauderdale. "I'm no saying but they're an ornament to a country, and grand things for you, and the like of you, that make verses; but I canna see any reason why they should come between me and the sun. I'm no so high, but I'm maybe mair important in the economy of creation. Yet, for a' that, there's yon bald fellow yonder, with a' those patches on his crown, puts himself right between us and the light without even asking pardon. It's no respectful to you in your position, Colin. They're awfu' like men. I've seen a man standing like that across another man's life — or whiles another woman's," said the philosopher. "It's not an encouraging spectacle. I'm no heeding about Nature, that kens no better; but for a man ——"

"Perhaps the man, too, might know no better," said Colin, laughing; but his laugh

was slightly uneasy, for he, too, had been thinking, and it seemed to him that the subject was an unfortunate one to start with. "I don't see that he is much more responsible than the mountain. It may be in pursuing his own path, simply enough, that he shadows another man's for the moment — or another woman's, as you say, Lauderdale," he said, breaking off and laughing again. Somehow a little absurd colour had come to his face, he could not tell why.

"Ay," said Lauderdale, "and you're thinking that above a', that's real dangerous for a minister. When he's popular like you he has so many paths to cross — and young — and a kind of genius in his way — and no to call bad-looking neither," said the critic, turning upon Colin a somewhat savage look; "and then the women part of them, they're often awfu' haverils, and a young minister canna be uncivil. It's nae fault of the hill, but it's awfu' silly of me to let myself be kept in the shade."

"Hit fair," said Colin, laughing; "none of your blows in the dark. I am an innocent man; besides there are no interesting pathways in my way to cross," the young man added with natural pathos; for, indeed, since the days of Matty Franklin and Alice, his opportunities on the whole in that particular had been small.

"It's grand when he does not lose his road himself," said Lauderdale. "That's an awfu' advantage on the part of the hills. They've nae responsibility, no being voluntary agents; but I've seen a man lose his ain way that had been a shadow on another man's road — or woman's, as you were saying. We're done with that now," said the philosopher; "the shadows are no so long lingering in the morning — but I am real glad to be clear of it myself. You see, after a', we're no in Italy, though we're coming south. I dinna understand a country that makes you hide in the midday, and lose your time in a' the corners. Here a man can walk in the sun."

"Even in another man's sun," said Colin, "or woman's, according to what you have just been saying. But we will have enough of it to-day, before we get to our journey's end."

"Ay," said Lauderdale; "there's something awfu' unreasonable in this life, take it at the best. As for logic, I never was great on that point. The grand thing of a man is, that you never can tell what he'll do the next moment. I'm no denying the force of character. It's the only thing in this world that gives a kind of direction, but I wouldna even put my trust in character. I ken you very well, for example," he continued; "wonderful well, considering you're a human creature like myself. I have a kind of idea what you would be most likely to think on most subjects, and could very near run the risk of prophesying what you would *say;* but, when you turn that corner out of my sight, I ken no more what may be the next thing you'll do than if I had never heard your name. No, I'm no tired at this hour of the morning — but I've an awfu' objection to dust, and the road is as powdery as a mill. My intention is to take a seat on this brae and let that carriage pass."

"Wait a little, then; it comes on very slowly; there must be some invalid in it, for the horses look good enough," said Colin, and he turned his back to the carriage which was approaching, in order to survey the green slope, covered with trees and brushwood, upon which Lauderdale meant to rest. They were separated a little when the carriage came up, and neither of them paid much attention to it. Lauderdale was already half way up the slope, and Colin was standing by the side of the road, looking after him. The horses had quickened their pace at the last moment, and had passed before Colin could turn round to see who the travellers were; but at that moment, as the carriage rolled along behind him, he gave a start so violent that the stones under his feet seemed suddenly to get in his way and trip him up, and Lauderdale for his part came down from the brae with a long leap and strange exclamation. "What was that?" they said to each other, in the same breath, and paused for a moment, and looked in each other's faces, and listened. The carriage went on faster, raising a cloud of dust, and nothing was to be heard except the sound of the horses' hoofs and the wheels. It was Colin that was the first to break the silence. He detached himself from among the stones and bushes, where he got entangled in that moment of agitation, and sprang back again to the high road which lay before him, veiled in a cloud of dust. "It is simply absurd," said Colin. "Lauderdale, I cannot imagine what you mean; you are enough to drive a man mad. Some one gives a chance outcry in passing, and you make up your mind that it is —— Good heavens! I never knew such folly!" cried the young man. He took off his hat without knowing it, and thrust his hair up over his forehead, and made an effort to take courage and regain his composure as he took breath. But it was very clear that Lauderdale had nothing to do with Colin's excitement. He had himself heard the cry, and felt in his heart

that it was no imagination. As he stood there in his pretended indignation the impulse of flight came upon him—a certain terror, which he could not explain nor comprehend, came over him. There was not a man in existence before whom he would have flown; but that little cry of recognition took away all his courage. He did not feel in himself the strength to go forward, to venture upon a meeting. The blood which had rushed to his face for the first moment seemed to go back upon his heart and stifle it. He had made a step or two forward without thinking; but then he arrested himself, and wavered, and looked upon the road which lay quite tranquil behind him in the shadow of the hills. It seemed to him for the moment as if his only safety was in flight.

As for Lauderdale, it took him all the time which Colin had occupied in these thoughts to get down from his elevation and return to his friend's side. He for his part was animated and eager. "This is no *her* country," said Lauderdale; "she's a traveller, as we are. The carriage will stop at our next stage, but there's no time to be lost;" and as he said these words he resumed his march with his long steady step without remarking the hesitation of Colin or what he had said. The young man himself felt that saving impulse fail him after the first minute. Afterwards, all the secondary motives came into his mind, and urged him to go on. Had he allowed that he was afraid to meet or to renew his relationship with Alice Meredith, supposing that by any extraordinary chance this should be she, it would be to betray the secret which he had guarded so long, and to betray himself; and he knew no reason that he could give for such a cowardly retreat. He could not say, "If I see her again, and find that she has been thinking of me, I shall be compelled to carry out my original mistake, and give up my brighter hopes,"—for no one knew that he had made any mistake, or that she was not to his eyes the type of all that was dearest in woman. "The chances are that it is all a piece of folly—a deception of the senses," he said to himself instead—"something like what people have when they think they see ghosts. We have talked of her, and I have dreamed of her, and now, to be sure, necessity requires that I should hear her. It should have been seeing, to make all perfect;" and, after that little piece of self-contempt, he went on again with Lauderdale without making any objection. The dust which had been raised by the carriage came towards them like a moving pillar; but the carriage itself went rapidly on and turned the corner and went out of sight. And then Colin did his best to comfort and strengthen himself by other means.

"Don't put yourself out of breath," he said to Lauderdale; "the whole thing is quite explainable. That absurd imagination of yours yesterday has got into both our heads. I don't mind saying I dreamt of it all last night. Anything so wild was never put into a novel. It's an optical illusion, or, rather I should say, it's an ocular illusion. Things don't happen in real life in this kind of promiscuous way. Don't walk so quick and put yourself out of breath."

"Did you no hear?" said Lauderdale. "If you hadna heard I could understand. As for me, I canna say but I saw as well. I'm no minding at this moment about my breath."

"What did you see?" cried Colin, with a sudden thrill at his heart.

"I'll no say it was *her*," said Lauderdale; "no but what I am as sure as I am of life that she was there. I saw somethng white laid back in the carriage, somebody that was ill; it might be her or it might be another. I've an awfu' strong opinion that it was her. It's been borne in on my mind that she was ill and wearying. We mightna ken *her*, but she kent you and me."

"What you say makes it more and more unlikely," said Colin. "I confess that I was a little excited myself by those dreams and stuff; but nothing could be more improbable than that she should recognize you and me. Bah! it is absurd to be talking of *her* in this ridiculous way, as if we had the slightest reason to suppose it was her. Any little movement might make a sick lady cry out; and, as for recognizing a voice at such a distance of time!—All this makes me feel like a fool," said Colin. "I am more disposed to go back than to go on. I wish you would dismiss that nonsense from your thoughts."

"If I was to do that same, do you think you could join me?" said Lauderdale. "There's voices I would ken after thirty years instead of after three; and I'm no likely to forget the bit English tone of it. I'm a wee slow about some things, and I'll no pretend to fathom your meaning; but, whether its draft-like or no, this I'm sure of, that if you make up to that carriage that's away out of our sight at this moment, you'll find Alice Meredith there."

"I don't believe anything of the kind. Your imagination has deceived you," said Colin, and they went on for a long time in silence; but at the bottom of his heart Colin felt that his own imagination had not deceived him. The only thing that had de-

ceived him was that foolish feeling of liberty, that sense that he had escaped fate, and that the rash engagements of his youth were to have no consequences, into which he had deluded himself for some time past. Even while he professed his utter disbelief in this encounter, he was asking himself how in his changed circumstances he could bear the old bridle, the rein upon his proud neck? If it had been a curb upon his freedom, even at the moment when he had formed it — if it had become a painful bondage afterwards while still the impression of Alice's gentle tenderness had not quite worn off his mind — what would it be now when he had emancipated himself from those soft prejudices of recollection, and when he had acknowledged so fully to himself that his heart never had been really touched? He marched on by Lauderdale's side, and paid no attention to what his friend said to him; and nothing could be more difficult to describe than the state of Colin's mind during this walk. Perhaps the only right thing, the only sensible thing, he could have done in the circumstances would have been to turn back and decline altogether this re-awakening of the past. But then at six-and-twenty the mind is still so adverse to turning back, and has so much confidence in its own power of surmounting difficulty, and in its good star, and in the favour and assistance of all powers and influences in heaven and earth; and then his pride was up in arms against such a mode of extricating himself from the apparent difficulty, and all the delicacy of his nature revolted from the idea of thus throwing the wrong and humiliation upon the woman, upon Alice, a creature who had loved him and trusted him, and whom he had never owned he did not love. Underneath all these complications there was, to be sure, a faint, sustaining hope that an encounter of this kind was incredible, and that it might turn out not to be Alice at all, and that all these fears and embarrassments might come to nothing. With all this in his mind he marched on, feeling the sweet air and fresh winds and sunshine to be all so many spectators accompanying him perhaps to the turning-point of his life, where, for all he knew, things might go against him, and his wings be clipped and his future limited for ever and ever. Perhaps some of Colin's friends may think that he exhibited great weakness of mind on this occasion, as, indeed, it is certain that there are many people who believe with some reason that it is next thing to a sin to put honour in the place of love, or to give to constancy the rights of passion. But then, whatever a man's principles may be, it is his character in most cases that carries the day. Every man must act according to his own nature as says the Arabian sage. Sir Bayard, even, thinking it all over, might not approve of himself, and might see a great deal of folly in what he was doing; but, as for a man's opinion of himself, that counts for very little; and he could only go on and follow out his career in his own way.

Lauderdale, on his side, had less comprehension of his friend at this point of his character than at any other. He had discouraged as far as he was able the earlier steps of the engagement between Colin and Alice; but when things "had gone so far" the philosopher understood no compromise. He hastened on through the dust, for his part, with a tender anxiety in his heart, concerned for the girl who had approached him more nearly than any woman had done since the days of his youth; who had been to him that mingled type of sister, daughter, dependant, and ruler, which a very young, very innocent, woman sometimes is to a man too old to fall in love with her, or even to think of such a weakness. Such love as had been possible to Lauderdale had been given early in his life — given once and done with; and Colin had filled up all the place in his heart which might have been left vacant as a prey to vagrant affections. At present he was occupied with the thought that Alice was ill, and that the little cry she had uttered had a tone of appeal in it, and was in reality a cry for help to those who had succoured her in her loneliness, and been more to her for one little period of her life than father or family. And Colin's friend and guardian pursued his way with great strides, going to the rescue of the tender little suffering creature, the mournful, yet dutiful, little woman who had borne her grief so courageously at Frascati, where they two were all the protectors, all the comforters she had. Thus the friends went on with their different sentiments, saying little to each other, and not a word upon this particular subject. They had meant to pause at a village which was on their way to Windermere to rest during the heat of the day and refresh themselves; and it was here, according to all likelihood, that the carriage which had passed with the invalid would also stop, to repose the sick lady if she was a stranger — to await the approach of the two pedestrians if it was Alice, and if she was free to take such a step. Lauderdale had no doubt either of the one or the other of these facts; and, to tell the truth, Colin, regarding the matter under an altogether dif-

ferent aspect, had little doubt on his part that the moment of fate had arrived.

Nevertheless, when he saw the first straggling houses of the hamlet — rude little Westmoreland houses, gray and simple with a moorland air, and no *grand Seigneur* near at hand to trim them into model cottages — It is so hard to believe what goes against one's wishes. After all, perhaps, the end would be a laugh, an exclamation of surprise, a blessed sense of relief; and no dreadful apparition of old ties and old vows to bind the freed-man over again in cold blood and without any illusion. Such feverish hopes came into Colin's mind against his will, as they drew nearer. The road was as dusty as ever, but he did not see the broad mark of the carriage wheels; and with a great throb of relief found when they came in sight of the little inn that there was no carriage, nothing but a farmer's gig before the door. He began to breathe again, throwing off his burden. "It might be one of my farmers for anything one could tell to the contrary," said Colin, with a short laugh and a sense of relief past describing. "You see now what fools we were to suppose —"

At that moment, however, the young man stopped short in the midst of his sentence. A man was coming to meet them who might have been, for anything, as Colin said, that one could say to the contrary, the farmer to whom the gig belonged. He was at present but a black figure against the sunshine, with his face shaded by his hat; but notwithstanding Colin stopped short when he came in sight of him, and his heart stopped beating. — or at least he thought so. He had seen this man once in his life before, — but once, and no more. But there are some circumstances which sharpen and intensify the senses. Colin recognised him the moment his eyes rested on him. He stopped short, because what he was saying was proved to be folly, and worse that folly. It was a denial of the certainty which had suddenly appeared before his eyes. He stopped without explaining why he stopped, and made a step onwards in a confused and bewildered way. Henceforward Lauderdale had nothing to do with it. It was Colin himself as the principal and contracting party who was concerned.

And the stranger, for his part, who had also seen the young man but once in his life, recognised Colin. It had only been for a moment, and it was nearly four years ago; but still Mr. Meredith knew, when he saw him, the young man whom he had bidden to begone for a fortune-hunter; who had closed his son's eyes, and laid Arthur in his grave; and given to Alice in her desolation the tenderest guardianship. He did not know Lauderdale, who had his share in all but the last act of that sad little domestic drama; but he recognised Colin by intuition. He came forward to him with the courtesy of a man whom necessity compels to change all his tactics. "Mr. Campbell, I think?" he said. "I feel that I cannot be mistaken. Alice was sure she saw you on the road. I came back after I had taken her home, to try whether I could meet you. Will you do me the favour to introduce me to your friend. I believe I am almost as much indebted to him as to you."

"There is no debt on one side or the other," said Lauderdale, interposing, for Colin found it difficult to speak. "Tell us how she is, which is far more important. We heard her give a cry, and since then we've been hurrying on to see."

"She is not at all well," said Mr. Meredith. "I hope you will consent to gratify my daughter by going back to dine with me. My house is close by here, and I came on purpose. Mr. Campbell, you may think you have a just grievance against me. I hope you will overlook it at present, and hear my explanation afterwards. We can never be sufficiently grateful for all you have done for my son, both before his death and after. It was a terrible dispensation of Providence; but I cannot be thankful enough that my poor boy lived to produce a work which has been of value to so many; and but for you it never could have been successfully published. My dear sir, I hope you will not suffer any personal feeling to me — I beg you to believe that what I said was said in ignorance — I mean, I trust that you will not refuse to gratify Alice. She is almost all I have left," Mr. Meredith said, with a faltering voice. "I have had great losses in my family. She has not been so much interested about anything for a long time. You will come with me, will you not, for Arthur's and for my daughter's sake?"

If any man could have said No to that appeal, Colin was not the man. He made little answer except by a bow, and Mr. Meredith turned with them, and they all got into the country vehicle at the door of the little inn, and drove off silent enough to the house where Alice was awaiting them. Colin had scarcely a word to say as he drove along by her father's side. The gaiety, and freedom, and happy thoughts with which he had set out on his journey seemed to detach themselves from his mind, and abandon him one by one. His fate had encountered

him where he had least expectation of meeting it. And yet at the same time a compunction awoke in his heart to think that it was in this way, like a captive brought back to her presence, that the man whom Alice loved was going to her. He could have felt aggrieved and angry for her sake, if the claim of his own reluctance and dread had not been nearer, and gained upon the more generous feeling. And yet withal he had a longing to see her, a kind of inclination to carry her off from this man, who had but a secondary claim upon her, and heal and cherish the wounded dove. It was this singular chance which changed the course of the excursion which the two friends had planned into the lake country, and made that holiday expedition of so much importance in the history of Colin's life.

PART XVII. — CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER XLIX.

"HOLMBY is not my house," said Mr. Meredith, as they drove up the avenue; "I took it to please Alice. She has a fancy for the North now, as she used to have for the South." As he said this he gave a wistful side-glance at Colin, who had scarcely spoken during all the drive; and even to this speech the young man made little response. The house was a pale gray house, of rough limestone, like the humbler houses, surrounded with wood, and bearing anything but a cheerful aspect. The avenue was long and straight, and the cold commonplace outline of this secluded dwelling-place filled up the vista between the two dark lines of trees, growing gradually more distinct as they approached. Everything had a certain visionary aspect to Colin at this moment, and the look of the house irritated him, as if it had been a type of the commonplace existence which he was henceforward to lead. He could not keep the cloud that was on his mind from appearing also on his countenance, though, at the same time, he could not help observing that Mr. Meredith looked at him often with a regard that was almost pathetic. To be sure, there was nothing very elevated in the aspect of this man, whose history was not one which Colin liked to think of; but still it was evident that his heart was trembling for his child, and that he was conveying to her the lover whom he had once rejected and insulted, as he might have carried a costly medicine, hard to procure, and of doubtful efficacy, but still the only thing that there was any hope in. Colin recognized this wistful look by the freemasonry of a mind equally excited, though in a different way; and, as for Lauderdale, he looked on at both with a painful doubt and uncertainty which had never yet entered into his thoughts in respect to Colin. For all this time he had been trying to think it was Alice's father, or even Alice herself, who was to blame; and now only he began to see clearly the reluctance of his friend to its fullest extent — his reluctance and, at the same time, that almost fantastic honour and delicacy which kept the young man from avowing even to his closest companion the real state of his feelings. So that now, at the first moment for a long time in which the fulfilment of Colin's engagement began to appear possible, Lauderdale, who had preached to him of constancy, who had longed after Alice, who had taken every opportunity of directing to her the truant thoughts of his friend, for the first time faltered. He began to see the other side of the question just at the time when it would have been agreeable to ignore it. He saw not only that Colin's happiness was at stake, but that it would be better for Alice even to break her heart, if that was inevitable, than to be married, not for love, but for honour; and unhappily he recognized this just at the moment when Sir Bayard, Sir Quixote, whatever absurd title you may please to give him — the Mistress's son, who was incapable of leaving a woman in the lurch, or casting upon her the shame of rejection — was going on to meet his fate. From this it will be seen that it was a very subdued and silent party which was at this moment driving along the long avenue under the trees, and making Alice's heart beat, in-doors on her sofa, with every turn of those wheels on the gravel. "Is papa alone?" she asked of her little sister, who was at the window; and her heart was jumping up into her throat when she uttered that simple question, as if it would take away her breath. When she received for answer a lengthened and interrupted description of the two gentlemen who accompanied Mr. Meredith, Alice put her head back on her pillows and closed her eyes in the sudden faintness of her great joy. For she in her simplicity had no doubt about Colin. If he had not loved her he would not have turned back; he would never have come to her. It was the tender guardian of her loneliness, the betrothed in whom she had reposed the entire faith of her nature, whom her father was bringing back to her; and, so far as Alice was concerned at this moment, the four intervening years had no existence. She had seen nobody and done nothing during that dreary interval. Ill-health, and seclusion, and mourning, had made it appear to her that her life had temporarily stopped at the time when Mr. Meredith carried her off from Frascati. And now, with Colin, life and strength and individuality were coming back. This was how the matter appeared on her side of affairs, and it seemed to Alice the natural solution of the difficulty; for, after all, but for her father's cruel persistence against her, which Providence by many blows had broken and made to yield, she would have been Colin's wife for all those years. And now, the one obstacle being removed, it seemed only natural to her straightforward and simple intelligence that the long-deferred conclusion should arrive at last.

Both she and the little sister at the window were in mourning. Mrs. Meredith was dead — the stepmother, who had been Alice's greatest enemy; and, of all the children who had once made their father indifferent to his elder son and daughter, the only one left was the little girl, who was giving her sister an elaborate description of the gentlemen who were with papa. This was why Mr. Meredith had yielded. Alice judged, according to her simple reckonings, with a little awe of the terrible means employed, that it was Providence who had thus overturned her father's resolution, and made him yielding and tender. It did not occur to her to ask whether for her happiness it was just or reasonable that so many should suffer; she only accepted it as providential, just as Colin four years before had persuaded himself that all the circumstances which had thrown them together were providential. And now the climax, which the poor girl permitted herself to think God had been bringing about by all the family convulsions of these four years, came close, and the heart of Alice grew faint with thankfulness and joy. When she heard them coming up stairs she sat upright, recovering with her old force of self-restraint her composure and calmness. Mr. Meredith came in with a little bustle to spare his daughter the agitation of the meeting. "You were quite right, Alice, my love," he said, bringing them hurriedly up to her. "Here is Mr. Campbell and your friend, Mr. Lauderdale. They recognized you at the same minute as you recognized them; and, if I had not been so foolish as to tell John to drive on, we might have picked them up and saved them their walk. I thought she was ill," the anxious father continued, turning his back upon Alice, and occupying himself with Lauderdale. "She had a fainting fit yesterday, and I was frightened it was that, or I should have stopped and picked you up. We are a little dark here with all these trees. I would have them cut down if Holmby was mine; but at this window, if you are fond of fine scenery, I can show you a beautiful view."

And it was thus that the two, who parted at Frascati as lovers within a few weeks of their marriage, met in the shaded drawing-room at Holmby. The most exciting events of Colin's life were framed within the interval; but nothing had happened individually to Alice. He seemed to find her exactly where he had left her, though with the sense of having himself travelled to an unutterable distance in the meantime. She did not say much in the tumult and confusion of her joy; she only held out her hand to him, and lifted her soft eyes to his face with a look of supreme content and satisfaction, which had the strangest effect upon Colin. He felt his doom fixed for ever and ever as he looked into the gentle blue eyes which conveyed to him all that was in Alice's heart. And she had not the slightest suspicion of the heaviness that was in his as he drew a chair near her sofa. "At last!" she said softly, under her breath. The little sister stood by, looking on with round eyes opened to their widest; but, as for Alice, she had no consciousness of any presence but one. And Colin sat down by her without any answer, in his heart not knowing what to say. Her black dress, her languid air, the paleness one moment, and the flush of delicate colour the next, all moved him strangely. Even had he not been Bayard he could not have done anything to wound the fair, feeble creature who looked at him with her heart in her eyes. And naturally the consequence was, that Colin answered in a way far more decisive than any words — by clasping the soft clinging hand, and bending down to kiss it as in the old Italian days. Alice had never had any doubt of her betrothed, but at that moment she felt herself receiving the pledge of a new and more certain troth — and in the revulsion from despondency and weakness her mouth was opened for the first time in her life — opened with a fullness, the thought of which would have covered poor Alice with misery and confusion if she could but have known what was passing in her companion's heart.

"I had grown so tired of waiting," she said, scarcely aware that she was speaking; "I was wearying, wearying, as Mr. Lauderdale used to say; and to think you should be passing so near and perhaps might have passed altogether, and never have known I was here! Oh, Colin, it was Providence!" said Alice, with the tears in her eyes.

And poor Colin, who did not know what to say, whose heart was bursting with the profound pity and instinctive tenderness of old, and with that sense that all his own imaginations were ended forever, and his future decided for him without any action of his own — Colin could find no answer to make. He bent down again on the pale, soft hand which he held in his own, and kissed it once more, with that tender affection which was anything in the world but love. "Yes," he said, but it was more to himself than to her,

"I think it was Providence." Alice had not an ear that could hear the despair that was in the words — for indeed it was a despair so mingled with softer emotions, with sympathy and anxiety, and a kind of fondness, that nobody could have found it out who did not know Colin to the bottom of his heart. This was how the meeting was accomplished after all those years; for by this time Lauderdale had looked at the view without seeing it, and was returning to see how his friend had gone through this encounter, and to claim Alice's recognition for himself. The two spectators who approached from the window, where they had been pretending to look at the view, were, to tell the truth, as much agitated as the young people themselves. Perhaps even, on the whole, a stranger, not knowing anything about the matter, would have concluded that it was Lauderdale and Mr. Meredith who were moved the most; for perhaps there is nothing which can happen to one's self, which moves one so profoundly as to watch a crisis of fate passing over another human creature whom one loves, yet whom one cannot die for or suffer for, and whose burden has to be borne, not by us, but by himself. Alice's father, for his part, looked upon this meeting somehow as his child's last chance for life, or rather, it would be better to say, as his own last chance to save her life and preserve her to himself; and Lauderdale saw Colin's happiness, which was almost of more importance than his life, hanging upon the doubtful expression in the sick girl's eyes. When the two turned back, it was impossible to mistake the sweet joy and serenity of Alice's looks. Excitement was unnatural to her in all circumstances. She had been agitated profoundly for a moment; but now all that was over, and the content of old had returned to her face. The same look that Lauderdale remembered at Frascati — the look which greeted Colin's arrival — not any tumult of delight, but a supreme satisfaction and completeness, as if there remained nothing more in the world to be looked for or desired! She half rose up to meet her old friend as he came back to her, himself greatly moved, and not venturing to look at Colin, and held out both her hands to him. "Oh, Mr. Lauderdale, I have not told you how glad I am, nor how I have been *wearying*," said Alice. She said even that word — the word she had once laughed at — as if with a soft appeal to his recollection. She had said it so often to herself in those long years — half because it was Scotch, and pleased her yearning fancy; and half because there was a lingering depth of expression in it, like her long watch and vigil. And then she smiled in his face, and then cried a little. For notwithstanding her tranquillity, all this had tried her weakness, and proved a little more than she could bear.

"You must not agitate yourself, Alice," said Mr. Meredith, taking, as most men do, the result of her past agitation for the thing itself. "She is still a little weakly, but I hope now we shall soon see her strong again." This he said with again a covert glance at Colin, who was still sitting close to the sofa of Alice, with his face shaded by his hand. Notwithstanding that shade the young man knew by instinct the look that was being directed upon him, and turned to meet it; and on his face there were greater marks of agitation than on that of Alice, which had been relieved by her tears. He was pale, and to Lauderdale's anxious eyes seemed to have fallen back from his vigour of manhood for the moment into that unassured youth which he had left behind him for years. And then the voice of Mr. Meredith had an effect upon Colin's mind altogether different from that produced by the soft familiar tones of Alice. When the father spoke, Colin's heart shut fast its doors, and rose up against the impending fate.

"If Miss Meredith was ill," he said, with a little bitterness, taking at least advantage of the rights thus pressed back upon him to repulse this man, whom he could not help disliking in his heart, "I am surprised that you did not let me know."

This speech was so unexpected and sudden, and there was in it such an amount of suppressed exasperation, that Lauderdale made a step forward without knowing it, and Alice put out her hand vaguely to arrest the vehemence of her betrothed. As for Mr. Meredith, he was as much relieved by the assumption of right in Colin's words, as he was disturbed by his unfriendly tone.

"My dear sir," said the father, "I hope you will let bygones be bygones. I have learned many severe lessons, and Providence has dealt with me in a way to make me see my errors; but I can safely say that, since I understood the true state of the case, I have always reproached myself for not having shown the gratitude I felt to you."

Colin, for his part, did not make any answer. His temper was disturbed by the struggle he had been going through. He could not cry and get over it, like Alice; being a man it was only in this way that he could give a little vent to his feelings. And then he could relieve himself by putting out some of his pain upon Mr. Meredith, with-

out injury to her who had thus thrown herself undoubtingly upon his love, as she supposed. Perhaps Bayard himself, under the same circumstances, would have done as much.

"I may say, my gratitude to both," said Mr. Meredith, whose anxiety that he might not lose this chance for Alice was so great that it made him almost smile, and who could not help recollecting at that inopportune moment the letter he had written to Lauderdale; "I know that Mr. Lauderdale also was very kind to my poor boy. I hope you will both excuse the error of the moment," he said, faltering a little. It was hard to own himself altogether in the wrong, and yet in his anxiety he would have done even that for Alice's sake.

"Speak no more of that," said Lauderdale. "Our friend Arthur spoke of his father with his last breath, and we're no like to forget any of his words. It's an awfu' consolation to my mind to see *her* again, and to feel that we're a' friends. As for Colin, he's a wee out of himself, as is natural. I would have been real vexed," said the philosopher, with the smile that was half tears, and that Alice remembered so well, "being sure of Arthur for a fast friend whenever we may meet again, to have lost all sight and knowledge of you.'

He looked at Alice, but it was to Arthur's father that he held out his hand; and, as for Colin, it was impossible for him not to follow the example, though he did it with a certain reluctance which did not escape any of the spectators. And then they all made believe to be composed and at their ease, and began to talk, forming a little circle round Alice's sofa, outside of which the little sister, with her eyes open to their widest extent, still stood, drinking in everything, and wondering much what it could mean.

"And, now that we have you," said Mr. Meredith, "we cannot let you go again. You can go to Windermere, and any other place worth seeing, from Holmby. You must tell me where to send for your things, and we will try to make you comfortable here."

"We have no things but those we carry with us," said Colin. "We are pedestrians, and not fit for ladies' society. I am afraid we must go upon our dusty way, and return again," he added, with an involuntary glance at Alice. It was because he thought he was failing of his duty that he said these last words; but they were unnecessary so far as Alice were concerned, who had no suspicions, and, most likely, if she had known his secret, would not have understood it. It did not come into her head as a possible idea that he would thus have come to her again and accepted his old position had he not loved her; and in her truthfulness she had the superiority over Colin, notwithstanding, perhaps, that his motives were of a higher order, and his mode of thinking more exalted than anything that could ever have come into her honest and simple mind.

"Oh, we will put up with your dress," said Mr. Meredith, putting on a heartiness that was scarcely natural to him. "We can be tolerant on that point. I will give orders directly about your rooms. Alice is not well enough to see visitors, and your coats do not matter to her," he went on, with a little laugh; not that he was merry, poor man, but that, like all the rest, he was agitated, and did not know how to give it vent. As for Alice, she did not say anything, but she turned her soft eyes upon Colin with a look that seemed to caress him and his dusty vestments. If he had been in the roughest peasant's dress, it would not have made any difference to Alice. Her soft, tranquil eyes rested upon him with that content and satisfaction which are the highest compliments that eyes of woman can make to man. When he was there she had no longer any occasion to look into the world, or seek further; and she could not but smile at the idea that his dusty coat mattered anything. Thus it was that everything was settled before Colin knew what was being done. The sun was still high in the heavens when he found himself established at Holmby, by Alice's side, an inmate of her father's house; he who had got up that morning with the idea that he was entirely sundered from his old ties, and that nothing in the world was so impossible as such a return upon the past. Even now, when it had taken place, he did not believe it was true or possible, but sat as in a dream, and saw the fair shadow of the Alice of Frascati moving and speaking like a phantom. Would it remain for ever, looking at him with the soft eyes which he felt ashamed to meet, and to which he could make so little response? A kind of despair came over Colin as the slow afternoon waned, and the reality of the vision began more and more to force itself upon him. Everything was so frightfully true and natural, and in reason. He had to baffle not only the eyes of Alice, but those of Lauderdale, who, he felt sure by instinct, was watching him, though he never could catch him in the act, and put him down as of old by the broad, full, half-defiant look which he had learned was his best shield against all question. Lauderdale

had grown too skilful to subject himself to that repulse, and yet Colin knew that his friend observed his smallest action, and heard every word he was saying, however distant he might be. And thus the day passed on in a kind of distracting vision; and they all dined and talked, and looked, as it is the duty of any party of people in England to look, exactly as if they had been all their lives together, and it was the most natural thing in the world.

CHAPTER L.

THE evening passed on, Colin could not very well tell how; and he began to see a prospect of escaping a little, and gaining a moment's breathing time, to realize, if he could, the astonishing revolution which had taken place. Alice, who was an invalid, retired early; and after that the conversation had flagged, and the three men who had so little in common, and who had been, on the sole occasion which had brought them into contact with each other before, so entirely in opposition, found it hard to know what to say, so as to cultivate all the friendly feelings that were possible, and dissipate the disagreeable reminiscences. Mr. Meredith betook himself to the only subject that seemed to him possible — his son's book, which Colin had edited so carefully; but then it is already known to the readers of this history that Colin's opinions were by no means those of the "Voice from the Grave." And then the young man was burning to escape — to get out of doors and feel the wind on his face, and endeavour in the silence and darkness to realize his position. He had to escape not only from Mr. Meredith, who watched him with the anxiety of a man who fears to see his last hope escape him, but also from Lauderdale, who was concerned less for Alice than for Colin, and whose anxiety, now that his mind had been fully awakened, was as great that Colin should not risk his own happiness, as was Mr. Meredith's anxiety that the happiness of Alice should be secured. Of the two, it was the latter whom Colin could meet with most ease; for it was no way necessary that he should open his heart to a man who sought him only as he might have sought a physician, and, indeed, there was a certain relief to his mind in the expression of some irritation and resentment towards Mr. Meredith, who had once insulted him, and was friendly now only from the most interested motives. When he at last found it possible to leave the room where he was sitting, and had actually opened the door to escape into the open air, it was Mr. Meredith who detained him. "Pardon me," he said; "but, if you would but give me five minutes in my own room — I have a great deal to say to you." Colin was obliged to yield, though his impatience was unspeakable; and he followed Mr. Meredith into the library, which, like all the other rooms in the house, was but partially lighted. Here Alice's father gave his guest a chair, with solemnity, as for an important conference, and this was more than Colin's powers of self-restraint could bear.

"I cannot ask you to pardon *me*," he said, putting his hand on the back of the chair. "You will, perhaps, understand that all that has happened to-day has disturbed my calculations a little. A man cannot go back four years of his life in so unexpected a way without feeling a little off his equilibrium. May I ask you to postpone till to-morrow what you have to say?"

"Only a moment — only three words," said Mr. Meredith; "I hope you have forgiven me for the mistake which I have regretted ever since. I meant no slight to you, whom I did not know. I was naturally excited to find my daughter in such circumstances; and, Mr. Campbell, I am sure you are generous; you will not let a mere mistake prejudice you against me."

"It was not a mistake," said Colin coldly; "you were right enough in everything but the motives you imputed to me; and I am almost as poor a man now as I was then, with very little chance of being richer — I may say, with no chance," he went on, with a certain pleasure in exaggerating his disadvantages. "A Scotch minister can make no advance in his profession. Instead of finding fault with what you did then, I feel disposed to bid you weigh well the circumstances now."

Mr. Meredith smiled, with a little air of protection, and drew a long breath of relief. "Alice will have enough for both," he said; "and Providence has taught me by many severe lessons the vanity of riches. She will have enough for both."

It was at this moment that all the bitterness of the sacrifice he was making rushed upon Colin's mind — rushed upon him like a flood, quenching even the natural courtesy of his disposition, and giving him a certain savage satisfaction in wreaking his vengeance upon the rich man, whose riches he despised, and whose money smelt of spoliation and wrong. All the silent rage against his fate which possessed Colin — all the reluctance and disappointment which a higher principle kept in abeyance in presence of

the innocent Alice — blazed up against her father in a momentary glare which appalled the victim. Colin might give up his ideal and his dreams for tender friendship and honour and compassion; but the idea of any sordid inducement mingled with these motives drove him the length of passion. It was, however, not with any demonstration, but in a white heat of bitterness and angry resistance that he spoke.

"It will be better that we should understand each other clearly on this point," said Colin. "I am not your judge, to say you have done well or ill; but it is a matter on which I may be permitted to have my own opinion. I will not accept a shilling of your fortune. If Alice is content to have me as I am, she shall have all the care, all the tenderness that I can give her; but — pardon me, it is necessary to speak plainly — I will take nothing from you."

Colin stood up with his hand on the back of his chair, and delivered his charge full into the breast of his unsuspecting opponent. Perhaps it was cruel; but there are circumstances under which it is a relief to be cruel to somebody, and the pain in his soul found for itself a certain expression in these words. As for the unhappy victim who received them, the sense of surprise almost deadened the effect for the moment; he could not believe that he had heard rightly. Mr. Meredith was of the Low Church, and was used to say every day that wealth was vanity, and that the true treasure had to be laid up above; but still his experience had not shown him that poor young priests of any creed were generally so far moved by these sentiments as to despise the fortune which a wife might bring them. He was so much amazed that he gave a gasp of consternation at the young man who thus defied him, and grew not pale but gray with an emotion which was more wonder than anger. But Mr. Meredith was not a bad man, notwithstanding that he had ruined several households, and made himself rich at other people's expense; and, even had he felt the full force of the insult personally, his anxiety about Alice would have made him bear it. That fatherly dread and love made him for the moment a great deal more Christian than Colin, who had thus assaulted him in the bitterness of his heart.

"Mr. Campbell," he replied, when he had sufficiently recovered himself to speak, "I don't know what you have heard about me. I don't mean to enter upon any defence of myself. My poor boy, I know, misunderstood some transactions, not knowing anything about business. But, so far as I can see, that matters very little between you and me. I have explained to you that my conduct in reference to yourself was founded on a mistake. I have expressed my gratitude to you in respect to my son; and now, if we are to be more closely connected" —

"That depends upon Miss Meredith," said Colin, hastily. "You have opened your doors to me voluntarily, and not by my solicitation; and now it is to *her* that I have a right to address myself. Otherwise it would have been better if you had not asked me to come here."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Meredith. He thought he saw a doubtful gleam in Colin's eye, and an accent of repugnance in his voice, and he trembled to the bottom of his heart lest perhaps, after all, he might lose this chance of preserving his daughter. "Yes, yes," he said, with a smile, which it cost him a little trouble to assume, and which looked horribly out of place to Colin; "I ought to have learned by this time that it does not do to interfere between lovers. I allow that it lies entirely between her and you."

He might have said a great deal more if his young hearer would have given him time; but Colin was only too glad to escape. The word "lovers" which Mr. Meredith used, the smile which the poor man was so far from meaning, the lighter tone which belied his feelings quite as much as Colin's, drove that young man half frantic with impatience and disgust. At last he managed to get his will, and escaped out of doors, with the cigar which was an excuse for his thoughts. The night was dark, and agitated by a ghostly wind, and the country, utterly unknown, which lay round the house in the darkness, and which neither memory nor imagination presented to the mind of the stranger, increased the natural effect of the gloom and the solitude. He went down through the long, straight opening of the avenue, which was a little less black than the surrounding world, with a sensation of loneliness which was as strange as it was painful. He did not seem to know himself or his life henceforward any more than he knew the wild, strange country over which the night and the wind ruled supreme. It seemed to him as if the solace of friendship, the consolation of sympathy, was also ended forever; he could not talk, even to those who were most dear to him, of his betrothed or of his marriage — if, indeed, that was what it must come to. He had walked up and down the avenue two or three times, from one end to another, before even a little coherence came to his thoughts. All was so strange and unbelievable as yet; so like a

trick of magic played upon him by some malign magician. He was not capable of thinking; but everything passed before him like a vision, appearing and disappearing out of the darkness. His old freedom, his impulses of resolution, the force and fulness of life with which he was young enough to sport, even in its most serious strength, and all the sweet wealth of imagination that had lain hoarded up for him among the clouds — these were things that belonged to yesterday. To-night it was another world that seemed to lie before him in the gloom, a separate sphere from the actual world in which he was standing. Vague limitations and restrictions which he could not identify were awaiting him, and he saw no way of escaping, and yet did not know how he was to bear the future thraldom. As this ferment calmed down a little, Colin began to think of Alice, sweet, and patient, and dutiful as she always was. He even resented, for her sake, his own indifference and repugnance, and said bitterly to himself that it was hard that such a woman should be accepted as a necessary burden, and not longed for as a crown of blessing; but yet, with all that, he could not cheat his own heart, or persuade himself that he wanted to marry her, or that it was less than the sacrifice of all his individual hopes to enter again upon the old relationship, and fulfil the youthful bond. When, however, he attempted to ask himself if he could escape, the same heart which sank at the thought of this bond baffled and stopped him in his question. It was not the same case as that of Lancelot and Elaine, though Colin was the Lancelot in so far that

"He loved her with all love except the love
Of men and women when they love the best."

But then it was he who had knitted in youthful generosity and indiscretion the chain that now lay on his limbs like iron. Alice had done nothing unmaidenly, nothing that in all honour and delicacy she ought not to have done. To be sure, another man as honourable as Colin might have given her to understand, or permitted her to find out, the change which had taken place in his sentiments. But then Colin could not even assert with any truth that his sentiments had changed. For he was almost as conscious that she was not the woman of his imagination when he led her home from the ilex avenue on the day which determined their fortunes as he was now after the long separation which had not broken the link between them. He had known in his heart that it was not broken, even when he had most felt his freedom; and now what could he do? Perhaps that morning, after the carriage had passed him, after the little cry of recognition which convinced his heart, but which his mind could still have struggled against, he might have turned back as he had once thought of doing, and fled ignominiously. But that moment was past, and there was nothing to be done but accept the results of his own youthful rashness. These were the thoughts that went through his mind as he walked up and down the avenue between the two long lines of trees, hearing the wind roar among the branches overhead, and feeling that henceforward there must always be a secret in his heart, something which nobody must discover, a secret which neither now nor at any time could be breathed into any sympathetic ear. This sense of something to conceal weighed harder upon Colin than if it had been a crime — for there is no crime so terrible but a human creature may entertain the hope some time of relieving his mind of it, and breathing it into the ear of some confidant, covenanted either by love or religion, who will not shrink from him in consequence of that revelation. The sting of Colin's burden was that he could never relieve himself of it, that all the questions raised by it must absolutely confine themselves to his own mind, and must lie unnamed and even unsuggested between him and those friends from whom he had never hidden anything but this. All this he revolved in his mind as he contemplated his position. So far from seeking sympathy, it would be his business to refuse and ignore it, should it be given by any implication, and to seek congratulations, felicitations, instead. All this he was going to do for Alice's sake; and yet he did not love Alice. He looked up at a faintly-lighted window, where there seemed to be a shaded light as in an invalid's room, and thought of her with a mixture of bitterness and sweetness, of tender affection and unconquerable reluctance, of loyalty almost fantastic, and the most painful sense of hardship, which it would be impossible to describe. She, for her part, was lying down to rest with her heart full of the sweetest content and thankfulness, thinking with thoughts so different from him how her life had changed since the morning, and how the almost-forgotten sunshine had come back again to remain for ever. This was how Alice was looking at the matter, and Colin knew it in his heart. If she could but walk out of that soft paradise to see the darkness and the turmoil in his mind! But that was what she must never find out. And thus

Colin made up his mind, if he could ever be said to have had any doubt in his mind, as to what was to be done. He did not even cheat himself by the hope that anything could happen to deliver him. It was Providence, as Alice had said. Perhaps it might come darkly into the young man's mind to wonder whether those severe lessons which Mr. Meredith said he had had in his family, whether all those fatal losses and sorrows which Alice regarded with awe, yet with a certain devout admiration, as God's mysterious way of bringing about her own happiness, could be considered as designed to effect that end which did not make him happy, for in such a question, personal content or dissatisfaction has a great deal to do with the way in which a man regards the tenor of Providence. Had he been as happy as Alice was, perhaps he too would have concluded that this was but another instance how all things work together for good. But, as he was not happy, he plunged into a world of more painful questions, and returned again as before, always at the end of a few minutes, after his favourite speculations had beguiled him for a little out of the immediate matter in hand, to realize, as if by a flash of lightning, all the facts of the case, and all the necessities before him. There may be many people who will condemn Colin both for remaining indifferent to Alice, and for remaining faithful to her in his indifference. But this is not a defence nor eulogium of him, but simply a history. It was thus his mind acted under the circumstances. He could conduct himself only according to his own nature; and this is all that there is to say.

All this time Lauderdale was standing at his window, watching in the darkness for an occasional glimpse of something moving among the trees. He had put out his light by instinct, that Colin might not think he was being watched. He kept looking out upon the wild tree-tops swaying about in the wind, and upon the wilder clouds, dashed and heaped about the sky, with a great sadness in his heart. Colin's nature was not like his; yet by dint of a sympathy which had been expanding and growing with the young man's growth, and a knowledge of him and his ways, which no one in the world perceived to the same extent, Lauderdale had very nearly divined what was in his friend's heart. He divined at the same time that he must never divine it, nor betray by word or look that such an idea had ever entered his mind. And that was why he put his light out, and, watching long till Colin had come in, said his prayers in the dark, and went to rest without seeking any communication with him, though his heart was yearning over him. It was Colin, and not Lauderdale, who was the hero of that silent struggle. Yet perhaps there was no single pang in the young man's suffering so exquisite as that which thrilled through his companion as he resigned himself to an appearance of repose, and denied himself so much as a look at his friend, to whom he had been like a father. At such a moment a look might have been a betrayal; and now it was Lauderdale's business to second Colin's resolution to avoid all confidence, and to save him even from himself.

CHAPTER LI.

After this agitated night the morning came, as morning has a knack of coming, with that calm freshness and *insouciance* which exasperates a mind in distress. What does Nature care about what happened last night or may happen to-morrow? If she had disturbed herself for such trifles she must have died of it in her first thousand years. The new day, on the contrary, was as gay and as easy in her mind as if in all the world there were no painful puzzles awaiting her, and no inheritance of yesterday to be disposed of. Somehow the sight of that fresh and joyous light revealed to Colin the looks of the fair spring mornings in Italy, which used to burst in upon Arthur's deathbed with what always seemed to him a look of careless surprise and inquiry. But Alice for her part found a tender sweetness in the new day. All that was bright in nature came and paid court to her by reason of her happiness, for there is no fair-weather friend so frank in her intruded attentions as Nature, though it is happiness and not grandeur to which she attaches herself. Alice went down to breakfast that morning, which she had not been able to do for a long time. She had laid aside her black dress by instinct, and put on a white one, which had nothing but its black ribbons to mark it as mourning; and there was a little delicate colour on her cheek, and her eyes, though a little too large and clear, had a glimmer of sunshine in them, like the light in a dewdrop. Colin would have been hard-hearted indeed, had he refused to be moved by that tender revival of health and hope, which was owing to him solely; and his friends are aware that Colin was not hardhearted. He was, perhaps, even more thoughtful of her, more devoted

to her, than he would have been had the timidity of real love been upon him. When the breakfast was over — and naturally there was still a certain embarrassment upon the party so abruptly united, and made up of elements so unlike each other — Colin and Alice were left together. He proposed to her to go out, and they went out, for Alice had forgotten all about the precautions which the day before were so necessary for her. They went into the avenue, where the daylight and the sunshine had tamed down the wind into a cheerful breeze. Nothing of the landscape outside was to be seen from that sheltered enclosure — no more than could have been seen through the close shade of the ilexes at Frascati, which they were both thinking of as they strayed along under the shadow of the trees; but the stately elms and green transparent lime-leaves which shadowed the avenue of Holmby were as unlike as could be supposed to the closely-woven sombre green which shut out the overwhelming sunshine in the grounds of the Villa Conti. Here the sun was very supportable, to say the truth; there was no occasion to shut it out, and even when a great tree came in the way, and interfered with it, a little shiver came over Alice. And yet it was June, the same month in which they had wandered through the ilex cloister, and watched the span of blue sky blazing at the end, the only indication visible that the great shining glowing world lay outside. Colin was so full of recollections, so full of thoughts, that at first he could find but little to say; and, as for Alice, her content did not stand in need of any words to express it. And, indeed, no words could have expressed, on the other hand, the profound remorseful tenderness, almost more tender than love itself, with which Colin bent over her, and held her supported on his arm.

"Do you remember the ilexes in the Villa Conti?" he said. "It was about this time, was it not?"

"It was on the second of June," said Alice, hastily. She was half vexed that the day had not been marked by him as by her. "Oh, yes, I remember every twig, I think," she said, with a smile. "The second of June was on a Sunday this year. I think I cried nearly all day, for it seemed as if you never would come. And not to know where you were, or how you were, all these four dreary, dreary years!" ——

What could Colin do? He pressed the hand that clung to his arm, and answered as he best could, touched even more and more with that tenderness of remorse towards the woman who loved him. "You know it was not any fault of mine. It was your father who sent me away."

"Yes, I know," said Alice; "it was that always that kept me up, for I knew *you* would not change. Poor papa! he has had such dreadful lessons. Mrs. Meredith, you know, and the poor little children! I used to think, if God would only have taken me, and left them who were so happy" ——

And here there was a little pause, for Alice had some tears to brush away, and Colin, ever more and more *attendri*, could not but offer such consolations as were natural under the circumstances. And it was Alice who resumed after that, with the simple certainty natural to her mind.

"I see now that it was all for the best," she said; "God has been so good to us. Oh, Colin, is it not true about his mysterious ways? And that everything works together for good, though it may seem hard at the time?"

Perhaps Colin found it difficult to answer this question; perhaps, not being absorbed by his own happiness, he could not but wonder over again if the poor Mrs. Meredith and her children who were dead could have seen that working of Providence in the same light as Alice did. But then this was not a subject to be discussed between two lovers; and, if it was not Providence who had seized upon him in the midst of his thoughtless holiday, and brought him back to the bonds of his youth, and changed all his prospects in the twinkling of an eye, what was it? Not the heathen Fate, taking a blind vengeance upon Folly, which was a harder thing to think of than the ways, however mysterious, of God. These were not thoughts to be passing through a man's mind at such a moment; but Colin avoided the answer which was expected of him, and plunged into more urgent affairs.

"I must go away," he said; "do not look reproachful, Alice. I do not mean to continue my holiday after this. It seems to me we have waited a great deal too long already." Colin went on with a smile, which he felt to be forced, but which had no such effect upon Alice. "Now that the obstacles are removed, I cannot consent to any longer delay; and you know I have a house to take you to now, which I had not in the old times."

"You had always Ramore," said Alice; and the way in which she said it proved to him still once more that, though he had put

her out of his mind, Alice had forgotten nothing he had ever said to her. She spoke of the farmer's homely house not as of a place which she heard some vague talk of so many years ago, but as a home for which she had been longing. "And your mother!" said Alice; "if you had the most beautiful house in the world, I want you to take me there first of all; I want you to take me to her."

It will be seen from this that Alice did not think there was anything to be deprecated in Colin's haste. She accepted it as most reasonable, and the thing that was to be looked for. She thought it natural that he should be reluctant to lose sight of her again, as she, for her part, was very reluctant to lose sight of him; and thus they went on to make all their necessary arraugements. In this close and tender interview, as he saw even more and more how Alice depended upon him, how real the link between them had been to her even during those years of separation, and how, in her perfect good faith and simplicity, she considered him, and all belonging to him, as hers, Colin himself came to consider it the most natural and unquestionable conclusion. The pain in his heart softened, his reluctance seemed to melt away. Alice had more beauty at this time of her life than ever she had had before. Her weakness, and the charm of that hidden love which had been so long working in her, and which had now brightened into the fullest blossom, had given an expression hitherto wanting to her eyes. She was more individual and distinct by right of having kept and hoarded that individual attachment in her heart, in defiance of everything that could be done against it; and now in Colin's presence, believing as she did with that confidence which can be born only of love, in his entire interest in everything connected with her, her timidity disappeared, and she hourly gained interest and character. All this had its effect upon Colin so long as the two were together, straying through the avenue, crossing the bars of shade and the rays of sunshine, listening to the birds singing overhead and to the rustle of the summer leaves. It was harder work when they went indoors again, when Mr. Meredith's anxious face appeared, and the grave countenance of Lauderdale, carefully cleared of all anxiety, and become, so far as that was possible, altogether inexpressive. Colin was of so uncertain a mood that the very absence of all question in Lauderdale's eyes jarred upon him, though he could not have borne to be interrogated. He was high-fantastical beyond all previous precedent at that moment; and the readers of this history are aware that already, at various periods of his life, it had happened to him to be fantastical enough. The conversation and confidences of the avenue broke clean off when the party were all assembled within. Alice could not say anything before her father of her weariness and waiting, or it would have sounded like a reproach; and Colin, for his part, could not utter a word about his intentions or prospects to any ears but hers. He could speak to her, and she, who accepted everything said without any question, found nothing wanting in his words; and that was already a new link between them; but before her father and his own friend he was dumb. He could not even talk to Lauderdale as he had talked to him four years ago at Frascati; and yet he resented that Lauderdale did not ask him any questions. From which it will be seen that nothing could well be less manageable and reasonable than the state of Colin's mind at this moment, when the most important decision of his life was being made.

That evening it was he who sought an interview with Mr. Meredith. It was very clear, in every point of view, that everything should be arranged with the least delay possible. "I have served half as long as Jacob did," Colin said, with a smile, which, however, was far from being the radiant smile of a happy lover; and Alice's father, who was not by any means as confident in Colin's love as Alice was, was so much concerned that his daughter should not lose the happiness which meant not only happiness, but life and strength as well, that he did not venture to make any objections. Neither did the poor man resent the insult, when Colin repeated with mildness, yet with steadiness, his determination to receive nothing from him. Alice had something of her own, which came to her from her mother, the little revenue which Arthur had once had his share of, and on which the two had lived at Frascati: but beyond that, Colin, always superlative, would have none of the rich man's fortune, which was soiled, as he thought, with fraud and cruelty. Whether this accusation was just or unjust, poor Mr. Meredith, who was a kind father, swallowed it without saying anything, and consented to all his future son-in-law's requirements. Colin had made up his mind to leave Holmby at once, to hasten back to Lafton, and make all the preparations necessary to receive his bride; and the marriage was fixed to take

place in two months, in August, when Colin could take up again his broken thread of holiday. All this was arranged between the two as an absolute matter of business, requiring no expression of sentiment. If Mr. Meredith thought the young man a little cold and stern, and swallowed that sentiment as he had swallowed the other, after all, perhaps, it was best that in discussing what was a business matter even a bridegroom should talk in a business way. And, then, Alice was unquestionably satisfied, and had regained some colour on her cheek, and some elasticity in her step. She had never been *poitrinaire*, like Arthur. Her illness was a kind of hopelessness, a lingering languor, which was quite as capable of killing her as if it had been a legitimate disease; and this was a malady from which, to all appearance, only Colin and a happy life could deliver her. Under these circumstances, therefore, it was natural that Mr. Meredith, though a little wounded, and even a little alarmed, by the new son-in-law, who meant to have everything his own way, consented to his wishes, being anxious above all things to preserve his daughter. He caressed and petted Alice all the more when his consent had been made known to her, with a kind of faint idea, in his ignorance, that all the indulgences which had surrounded her would be at an end when she put herself under the power of this abrupt and imperious young man. As for Alice, she looked from her father to her betrothed with a serenity and confidence so profound that it went to Colin's heart. "She has been used to be taken care of all her life," her father said, as fathers generally say, but with an odd forgetfulness, for the moment, that Colin knew something about that. "I hope you will be very good to her."

Alice opened her soft lips at this, to give vent to a little ring of laughter so soft that it did not wound even the fantastical delicacy of her Bayard. To doubt Colin seemed to her not so much wrong as absurd, out of all reason. She said, half under her breath, "He has taken care of me before now"—and, to relieve herself of that which she could not express to her father without blaming him, it was to Lauderdale she turned. "You made me feel as if I were a princess," she said to him, and held out her hand to the friend who was looking on with an anxiety so intense that it precluded speech. As for Colin, in the high state of irritation in which he was, the very silence with which Lauderdale pressed the little hand of Alice between his own aggravated and exasperated him. Why did he not say something? Why did he not look him, the betrothed, straight in the eyes, and ask, "Are not you happy?" Had he done so Colin would have taken it as the direst and most unpardonable offence, but in the disturbed state of his heart and mind he resented the very absence of the question. A man must have some one to bear the brunt of his discontent when things go wrong with him, and in the meantime there was nobody but Lauderdale to bear this blow.

Accordingly, when all was settled, and when it was finally arranged that Colin should leave Holmby next morning and make haste home, to commence his preparations, it was of his own accord that he invited Lauderdale to join him in the avenue for half an hour's talk. The wind had fallen, and the night was very still, but it was almost as dark as on the previous evening, and the gloom had this advantage, that they could not see each other's faces, which was all the better under the circumstances. They had walked almost all the length of the avenue before Colin spoke, and then it was to this effect.

"Lauderdale, look here. I am going home, and leaving you in the lurch. We are not going to Windermere together, as we meant to do. You see, I have things more important in hand. What I want to say is, that you are not to think yourself bound by me. I see no reason why you should return because a—a good fortune so unexpected has come to me."

"Do you mean that you want me to go on my way?" said Lauderdale. "With me there is little need to speak in parables. Say plain out if you would rather be your lane. I am no a man to take offence—not from you."

"Good heavens!" said Colin, in his impatience, "why should you or any one take offence? What I tell you is the plainest statement of the case. I have to go home, but you are not obliged to go home. And why should you break off your excursion for me?"

"If I was minding about the excursion," said Lauderdale, "I would go on. You aye make so much account of yourselves, you callants. As for Windermere, I'm no bigoted, but if it's mair worth seeing than our ain lochs it would be a wonder to me. I'm no for parting company. It's aye been my way of thinking, that even a railroad, seen with four een, was better than the bonniest country in the world, seen with two only. We'll go twain, Colin, if you have no objections, you and me."

And then there was a silence, and the two

friends went on together side by side in the darkness, without a word to each other. Between them the ordinary words of congratulation would have sounded like mockery, and then the one divined too clearly the condition of the other to know what to say. Lauderdale, however, knew Colin so well that he knew silence to be as dangerous as speech.

"I have an awfu' desire in my mind," he said at length; "no doubt it's daft-like, but that is no extraordinary. I would like to do something with my hands to please her, now we've found her. I'm no rich, and, what's an awful deal worse, I'm no much good for anything but talk — and maybe she has an inkling of that. What was that yon lad Browning says about Raphael's sonnets and Dante's picture? I'm of that opinion mysel'. I would like to do something with my hands that was nae fit work for the like of me, just to please her; if it was naething better than the things they whittle with their knives away yonder among the Alps," said Lauderdale; and even in the darkness Colin could see the little flourish of his arm with which he had the habit of indicating the never-to-be-forgotten region "away yonder." "Have patience a moment till I've done speaking," he went on; "I've been thinking I would like to take a good day's work at the Manse garden. It's as innocent a thing in its way to plant flowers as to write verses. So I'm saying I'll go home with you, if you've nae objections," said Lauderdale. He came to a conclusion so suddenly, that Colin, who had gradually yielded to the influence of the familiar tranquillizing voice, came to a sudden pause when he stopped short. Lauderdale paused too in his walk when his friend did so, though without knowing why. It was indifferent to him whether he kept walking or stood still; his mind went on pursuing its leisurely meditations all the same.

But Colin's heart was full. He grasped Lauderdale's arm without knowing it, with that sudden impulse of saying something which sometimes comes upon people who must not say what is in their hearts. "Come," he said, with a little choking in his voice, "we will do that day's work together; for I suppose there never was gain, however great, but had loss in it;" said Colin. Perhaps he did not know very well himself what he meant, but even these vague words were a little ease to him in their way. And then they went indoors, and the long day came to an end.

This was how the holiday excursion terminated. They left Holmby next day, and went home again; neither the one nor the other thinking any more of the Church Reformation, or of the "Tracts for the Times." When Colin found his MS. in his writing-case when he opened it on the night of his arrival at Ramore to write to Alice, he looked at it with a little wonder, as if it had been a fossil of an early formation unexpectedly disinterred among the fragments of daily use and wont. And then he returned it to its pocket, with something that looked like a very clumsy attempt at a smile. There are points of view from which a good-sized tree or a shepherd's cottage may blot out a mountain; and everybody knows how easily that is accomplished on the moral horizon, where a tiny personal event can put the greatest revolution in the background. It would be too long to tell the wonder and admiration and perplexed joy of the Mistress, when she heard of the accident which had put an end to her son's journey. Her joy was perplexed, because there was always a shadow which she could not decipher upon Colin's countenance; and, even if her mother's pride would have permitted her to consult Lauderdale on such a subject, or to suffer either him or herself to suppose for a moment that he could know more about her boy than she did, Lauderdale's lips were sealed. Colin stayed only a night at Ramore to let his family know of what was going to happen, and then he hurried on to Lafton, still accompanied by his friend. They talked of almost anything in the world during that journey, except of the preparations they were going to make, and the change that was to follow; but Colin's great ambition, and his work, and the more important change he meant to work in his native Church and country, had little part in their discussions. At such a moment, when it is next to impossible to a man to talk of what he is thinking of, it is such a wonderful relief for him to escape into metaphysics; and, fortunately, in that department of human investigation, there are still so many questions to discuss.

CHAPTER LII.

If this had been anything but a true history, it would have been now the time for Alice Meredith to overhear a chance conversation, or find a dropped letter, which would betray to her Colin's secret; but this is not an accident with which the present historian can give interest to his closing chapter, because, in the first place, it did not happen, and in the second, if a second should be thought necessary, Colin had

never confided his secret either to writing or to any mortal ear — which is of all ways of securing a private matter the most certain. He thought to himself, as he put his manse in order to receive her, with a certain inexpressible content, that never to any living creature, never even to the air that might have repeated the matter, had he so much as whispered what was the real foundation of the old betrothals, which were now about to be carried out. He had never been so near telling it as on the night before Alice re-appeared in his life,— that moment when the words were half formed on his lips, and nothing but a chivalrous, visionary sense of the respect he owed to a woman had prevented him putting an end to Lauderdale's recollections by a confession which would have closed his friend's lips forever. Fortunately he had been saved from that danger; and now nobody, even in the depths of their hearts, could say or feel that Alice had been ever regarded by her husband otherwise than as the chosen of a man's heart, the companion of his existence, should be regarded. He had by turns a hard enough struggle during these weeks, when he took refuge in his study at Lafton, in the midst of the disorganized house, where things were being prepared for the arrival of his wife, and in her garden, where Lauderdale had done more than a day's work, and had, indeed, taken the charge of re-arrangement into his hand. But the garden, in those lingering, never-ending summer twilights, in their northern sweetness, was too much for Colin; when the early stars came out on the skirts of the slow-departing day, they seemed to cast reproachful glances at him, as if he had abandoned that woman in the clouds. He used to go in with a sigh, and shut himself up in his study, and light his candles; and then, after all, it was a great good fortune that she had never come down out of those wistful distances, and walked upon the common soil, and looked him in the face. As for Alice, if anybody had betrayed to her the exact state of affairs, if she had been made aware of this mysterious and invisible rival towards whom, in the depths of his heart, Colin sighed, the chances are that she would only have laughed, in the supreme security of her ignorance. She could no more have understood the rivalry that was in that dream than she could have comprehended any other or better description of love than that which her betrothed gave her. For the fact is, that nobody need in the least bemoan Alice, or think that her position was one to call for sympathy. She was perfectly content, knowing so little of Colin's heart as she did, and she would have still been perfectly content had she known it much more profoundly. If he had regarded her as he could have regarded his ideal woman, Alice would not have understood, and probably even would have been embarrassed and made uneasy by such devotion. She had all that she had ever dreamed of in the way of love. Her ideal, such as it was, was fully realized. Colin's tenderness, which had so much remorse in it, was to Alice the most perfect of all manifestations of attachment. When his heart was full of compunctions for not giving her enough, hers was smiling with the sweetest pride and satisfaction in receiving so much. It even seemed to her odd by turns how a man so superior should be so fond of her, as she said to herself, in her innocence: for, to be sure, Arthur, though he was not equal to Colin, had given but a very limited consideration to his little sister. And her sense of the difference between Arthur's estimation of her and the rank she held with her betrothed was like the sweetest flattery to her mind. And, to be sure, Alice had reason in these conclusions of hers. She described Colin's affection perfectly in her simple words. It was as true to say he was fond of her, as it was that he did not love her according to his estimate of love. But then his estimate of love was not hers, and she was entirely content.

Thus it came about that these two were married after all the long delay and separation. Alice recovered her health by magic as soon as she began to be happy. And Mr. Meredith, notwithstanding that he smarted a little under the affront put upon him by his new son-in-law, in that singular and quite original development of disinterestedness, which Alice's father, being Low Church, could not but think most unlike a clergyman, was yet so exhilarated by the unrivalled success of his expedient to save his daughter, that all the lesser annoyances were swallowed up. And then he had always the little one remaining, whom he could make an heiress of. It was a quiet wedding — for the Mereditbs were comparatively strangers in Westmoreland — but, at the same time, it was not in the least a sad one, for Mr. Meredith did not think of weeping, and there was nobody else to take that part of the business. Alice had only her little sister to leave, who was too much excited and delighted with all the proceedings, and with her own future position as Miss Meredith, to be much overcome by the parting. It was, indeed, a beginning of life almost entirely without drawbacks to the bride. She had nothing much to regret in the past; no links

of tender affection to break, and no sense of a great blank left behind, as some young women have. On the contrary, all that was dark and discouraging was left behind. The most exquisite moments of her life, the winter she had spent in Frascati under the tender and chivalrous guardianship of the companions who had devoted all their powers to amuse and console Arthur's sister, seemed but an imperfect rehearsal, clouded with pain and sorrow, for the perfect days that were to come. "I wish for nothing but Sora Antonia to kiss me, and bid God bless us," she said, with the tears of her espousals in her eyes. And it was the best thing Alice could have said. The idyll for which Colin felt himself so poor a hero now, had existed, in a way, among the pale olive-groves, on the dear Albine hills. "Dio te benedica," he said, as he took away his bride from her father's door. It meant more than a blessing when he said it, as Sora Antonia might have said it, in that language which was consecrated to them both by love and death.

The scene and the circumstances were all very different when a few weeks later Colin took his bride to the Holy Loch. It was evening, but perhaps Colin had not time for the same vivid perceptions of that twilight and peaceful atmosphere which a few months before had made him smile, contrasting it with the movement and life in his own mind. But perhaps this was only because he was more occupied by external matters; by Alice at his side, to whom he had to point out everything; and by the greetings and salutations of everybody who met him. As for Alice herself, in her wistfulness and happiness, with only one anxiety remaining in her heart, just enough to give the appealing look which suited them best to her soft eye, she was as near beautiful as a woman of her unimposing stature and features could be. She was one of those brides who appeal to everybody, in the shy radiance of their gladness, to share and sympathize with them. There are some people whose joy is a kind of affront and insult to the sorrowful; but Alice was not one of them. Perhaps at that supreme hour of her life she was thinking more of the sad people under the sun — the mourners and sufferers — than she had done when she used to lie on her sofa at Holmby, and think to herself that she never would rise from it, and that *he* never would come. The joy was to Alice like a sacrament, which it was so hard to think the whole world could not share, and, as her beauty was chiefly beauty of expression, this tender sentiment shed a certain loveliness over her face as she stood by Colin's side, with her white veil thrown back, and the tender countenance, which was veiled in simplicity, and required no other covering, turned towards Ramore. Her one remaining anxiety was, that perhaps Colin's mother might not respond to the longing affection that was in her heart — might not take to her, as she said; and this was why her eyes looked so appealing, and besought all the world to take her into their hearts. When it came to the moment, however, when Colin lifted her out upon the glistening beach, and put her hand into that of his father, who was waiting there to receive them, Alice, as was her nature, recovered her composure. She held up her soft cheek to Big Colin of Ramore, who was half abashed by the action, and yet wholly delighted, although in Scotch reserve he had contemplated nothing more familiar than a hearty clasp of her hand. She was so fair a woman to his homely eyes, and looked so like a little princess, that the farmer had scarcely courage to take her into his arms, or, as he himself would have said, "use so much freedom" with such a dainty little lady. But Alice had something more important in her mind than to remark Big Colin's hesitation. "Where is she?" she cried, appealing to him first, and then to her husband; "where is she, Colin?" And then they led her up the brae to where the Mistress, trembling and excited, propped herself up against the porch awaiting her. Alice sprang forward before her escort, when she saw this figure at the door. She left Colin's arm as she had never left it before, and threw herself upon his mother. She took this meeting into her own hands, and accomplished it her own way, nobody interfering. "Mamma," said Alice, "I should have come to you four years ago, and they have never let me come till now. I have been longing for you all this time. Mamma, kiss me, and say you are glad, for I love you dearly," cried Alice. As for the Mistress, she could not make any reply. She said "my darling" faintly, and took the clinging creature to her bosom. And that was how the meeting took place, for which Alice had been longing, as she said, for four long years. When they took her into the homely parlour of Ramore, and placed her on the old-fashioned sofa, beside the Mistress, it was not without a little anxiety that Colin regarded his wife, to see the effect made upon her by this humble interior. But, to look at Alice, nobody could have found out that she had not been accustomed to Ramore all her life, or that the Mistress was not her own individual prop-

erty. It even struck Colin with a curious sense of pleasure that she did not say "mother," as making a claim on *his* mother for his sake, but claimed her instantly as her own, as though somehow her claim had been meant. "Sometimes I thought of running away and coming to you," said Alice, as she sat by the Mistress's side, in radiant content and satisfaction; and it would be vain to attempt to describe the admiration and delight of the entire household with Colin's little tender bride.

As for the Mistress, when the first excitement was over, she was glad to find her boy by himself for a moment, to bid God bless him, and say what was in her heart. "If it wasna that she's wiled the heart out of my breast," said Mrs. Campbell, putting up her hand to her shining eyes. "Eh, Colin, my man, thank the Lord; it's like as if it was an angel He had sent you out of heaven."

"She will be a daughter to you, mother," said Colin, in the fulness of his heart.

But at this two great tears dropped out of Mrs. Campbell's eyes. "She's sweet and bonnie; eh, Colin, she's bonnie and sweet; but I'm an awfu' hardhearted woman," said the Mistress. "I cannot think ony woman will ever take *that* place. I'm aye so bigoted for my ain; God forgive me; but her that is my Colin's wife has nae occasion for ony other name," she said with a tender artifice, stooping over her boy and putting back those great waves of his hair which were the pride of her heart. "And I have none of my ain to go out of my house a bride," the Mistress added, under her breath, with one great sob. Colin could not tell why his mother should say such words at such a moment. But perhaps Alice, though she was not so clever as Colin, had she been there, might have divined their meaning after the divination of her heart.

It is hard to see what can be said about a man after he is married, unless he quarrels with his wife, and makes her wretched, and gets into trouble, or she does as much for him. This is not a thing which has happened, or has the least chance of happening in Colin's case. Not only did Alice receive a very flattering welcome in Lafton, and what was still more gratifying in St. Rule's, where, as most people are aware, very good society is to be found; but she did more than that, and grew very popular in the parish, where, to be sure, no curate could have been more serviceable. She had undoubted Low Church tendencies, which helped her on with many of the people; and in conjunction with them she had little High Church habits, which were very quaint and captivating in their way; and, all unconscious as she was of Colin's views in respect to Church reformation, Alice was "the means," as she herself would have said, of introducing some edifying customs among the young people of the parish, which she and they were equally unaware were capable of having been interpreted to savour of papistry had the power and inclinations of the Presbytery been in good exercise as of old. As for Colin, he was tamed down in his revolutionary intentions without knowing how. A man who has given hostages to society, who has married a wife, and especially a wife who does not know anything about his crotchets, and never can understand why the bishop (seeing that there certainly is a bishop in the kingdom of Fife, though few people pay any attention to him) does not come to Lafton and confirm the catechumens, is scarcely in a position to throw himself headlong upon the established order of things and prove its futility. No. I. of the "Tracts for the Times," got printed certainly; but it was in an accidental sort of way, and though it cannot be said to have been without its use, still the effect was transitory, in consequence of the want of continuous effort. No doubt it made a good deal of sensation in the Scotch papers, where, as such of the readers of this history as live north of the Tweed may recollect, there appeared at one time a flood of letters signed by parish ministers on this subject. But then, to be sure, it came into the minds of sundry persons that the Church of Scotland had thoughts of going back to the ante-Laudian times, in robes of penitence, to beg a prayer-book from her richer sister — which was not altogether Colin's intention, and roused his national spirit. For we have already found it necessary to say that the young man, notwithstanding that he had many gleams of insight, did not always know what he would be at, or what it was precisely that he wanted. What he wanted, perhaps, was to be catholic and belong to Christendom, and not to shut himself up in a corner and preach himself and his people to death, as he once said. He wanted to keep the Christian feasts, and say the universal prayers, and link the sacred old observances with the daily life of his dogmatical congregation, which preferred logic. All this, however, he pursued in a milder way after that famous journey to Windermere, upon which he had set out like a lion, and from which he returned home like a lamb. For it would be painful to think that this faithful but humble history should have awakened any terrors in the heart of the Church of Scotland

in respect to the revolutionary in her bosom; and it is pleasant to be able to restore the confidence to a certain extent of the people and presbyters of that venerable corporation. Colin is there, and no doubt he has his work to do in the world; but he is married and subdued, and goes about it quietly, like a man who understands what interests are involved; and up to the present moment he has resisted the urgent appeals of a younger brotherhood, who have arisen since these events, to continue the publication of the "Tracts for the Times."

It is at this point that we leave Colin, who has entered on a period of his life, which is as yet unfinished, and accordingly is not yet matter for history. Some people, no doubt, may be disposed to ask, being aware of the circumstances of his marriage, whether he was happy in his new position. He was as happy as most people are; and, if he was not perfectly happy, no unbiassed judge can refuse to acknowledge that it was his own fault. He was young, full of genius, full of health, with the sweetest little woman in the kingdom of Fife, as many people thought, for his wife, and not even the troublesome interpellations of that fantastic woman in the clouds to disturb his repose. She had waved her hand to him for the last time from among the rosy clouds on the night before his marriage day; for if a man's marriage is good for anything, it is surely good against the visitings of a visionary creature who had refused to reveal herself when she had full time and opportunity to do so. And let nobody suppose that Colin kept a cupboard with a skeleton in it to retire to for his private delectation when Alice was sleeping, as it is said some people have a habit of doing. There was no key of that description under his pillow; and yet, if you will know the truth, there was a key, but not of Bluebeard's kind — it was a key that opened the innermost chamber, the watch-tower and citadel of his heart. So far from shutting it up from Alice, he had done all that tender affection could do to coax her in, to watch the stars with him and ponder their secrets; but Alice had no vocation for that sort of recreation. And the fact was, that from time to time Colin went in and shut the door behind him, and was utterly alone underneath the distant wistful skies. When he came out, perhaps his countenance now and then was a little sad; and perhaps he did not see so clear as he might have done under other circumstances. For Colin, like Lauderdale, believed in the *quattr' occhi* — the four eyes that see a landscape at its broadest and heaven at its nearest. But then a man can live without that last climax of existence when everything else is going on well in his life.

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