Warner Susan

The Old Helmet. Volume II

Susan Warner

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Содержание

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CHAPTER I
IN THE SPRING

"Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea."

Eleanor could not stay away from the Wednesday meetings at Mrs. Powlis's house. In vain she had thought she would; she determined she would; when the day came round she found herself drawn with a kind of fascination towards the place. She went; and after that second time never questioned at all about it. She went every week.

It was with no relief to her mental troubles however. She was sometimes touched and moved; often. At other times she felt dull and hopeless. Yet it soothed her to go; and she came away generally feeling inspirited with hope by something she had heard, or feeling at least the comfort that she had taken a step in the right direction. It did not seem to bring her much more comfort. Eleanor did not see how she could be a Christian while her heart was so hard and so full of its own will. She found it perverse, even now, when she was wishing so much to be different. What hope for her?

It was a great help, that during all this time Mrs. Caxton left her unquestioned and uncounselled. She made no remarks about Eleanor's going to class-meeting; she took it as a perfectly natural thing; never asked her anything about it or about her liking it. A contrary course would have greatly embarrassed Eleanor's action; as it was she felt perfectly free; unwatched, and at ease.

The spring was flushing into mature beauty and waking up all the flowers on the hills and in the dales, when Eleanor one afternoon came out to her aunt in the garden. A notable change had come over the garden by this time; its comparatively barren-looking beds were all rejoicing in gay bloom and sending up a gush of sweetness to the house with every stir of the air that way. From the house to the river, terrace below terrace sloped down, brimfull already of blossoms and fragrance. The roses were making great preparations for their coming season of festival; the mats which had covered some tender plants were long gone. Tulips and hyacinths and polyanthuses and primroses were in a flush of spring glory now; violets breathed everywhere; the snowy-flowered gooseberry and the red-flowered currant, and berberry with its luxuriant yellow bloom, and the almond, and a magnificent magnolia blossoming out in the arms of its evergreen sister, with many another flower less known to Eleanor, made the garden terraces a little wilderness of loveliness and sweetness. Near the house some very fine auriculas in pots were displaying themselves. In the midst of all this Mrs. Caxton was busy, with one or two people to help her and work under direction. Planting and training and seed-sowing were going on; and the mistress of the place moved about among her floral subjects a very pleasant representation of a rural queen, her niece thought. Few queens have a more queenly presence than Mrs. Caxton had; and with a trowel in hand just as much as if it were a sceptre. And few queens indeed carry such a calm mind under such a calm brow. Eleanor sighed and smiled.

"Among your auriculas, aunty, as usual!"

"Among everything," said Mrs. Caxton. "There is a great deal to do. Don't you want to help, Eleanor? You may plant gladiolus bulbs – or you may make cuttings – or you may sow seeds. I can find you work."

"Aunty, I am going down to the village."

"O it is Wednesday afternoon!" said Mrs. Caxton. And she came close up to her niece and kissed her, while one hand was full of bulbs and the other held a trowel. "Well go, my dear. Not at peace yet, Eleanor?" —

There was so tender a tone in these last words that Eleanor could not reply. She dashed away without making any answer; and all along the way to Plassy she was every now and then repeating them to herself. "Not at peace yet, Eleanor?"

She was in a tender mood this afternoon; the questions and remarks addressed to the other persons in the meeting frequently moved her to tears, so that she sat with her hand to her brow to hide the watering eyes. She did not dread the appeal to herself, for Mr. Rhys never asked her any troublesome questions; never anything to which she had to make a troublesome answer; though there might be perhaps matter for thought in it. He had avoided anything, whether in his asking or replying, that would give her any difficulty *there*, in the presence of others, – whatever it might do in her own mind and in secret. To-day he asked her, "Have you found peace yet?"

"No," said Eleanor.

"What is the state of your mind – if you could give it in one word?"

"Confusion."

"What is it confused about? Do you understand – clearly – the fact that you are a sinner? without excuse?"

"Fully!"

"Do you understand – clearly – that Christ has suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God?"

"Yes. I understand it."

"Is there any confusion in your mind as to the terms on which the Lord will receive you? – forsaking your sins, and trusting in him to pardon and save you?"

"No – I see that."

"Do you think there is any other condition besides those two?"

"No."

"Why do you not accept them?"

Eleanor raised her eyes with a feeling almost of injustice. "I cannot!" – she said.

"That makes no difference. God never gives a command that cannot with his help be fulfilled. There was a man once brought to Jesus – carried by foul men; he was palsied, and lay on a litter or bed, unable to move himself at all. To this man the Lord said, 'Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.' Suppose he had looked up and said, 'I cannot?'"

Eleanor struggled with herself. Was this fair? Was it a parallel case? She could not tell. She kept silence. Mr. Rhys went on, with tones subdued to great gentleness.

"My friend, Jesus invites to no empty board – to no cold reception. On his part all is ready; the unreadiness lies somewhere with you, or the invitation would be accepted. In your case it is not the bodily frame that is palsied; it is the heart; and the command comes to you, sweet as the invitation, – '*Give it to me*.' If you are entirely willing, the thing is done. If it be not done, it is because, somewhere, you are not willing – or do not believe. If you can trust Jesus, as that poor man did, you may rise up and stand upon your feet this very hour. 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?' he asked of the blind man whom he cured."

There was silence for an instant. And again, as he turned away from her, Mr. Rhys broke out with the song, that Eleanor thought would break her heart in twain this time, —

"How lost was my condition
Till Jesus made me whole;
There is but one physician
Can cure a sin-sick soul.
There's balm in Gilead —
To make the wounded whole.
There's power enough in Jesus
To save a sin-sick soul."

Eleanor had been the last one spoken to; the meeting soon was ended, and she was on her way home. But so broken-spirited and humiliated that she did not know what to do with herself. Could it be possible that she was not *willing*– or that she wanted *faith*– or that there was some secret corner of rebellion in her heart? It humbled her wonderfully to think it. And yet she could not disprove the reasoning. God could not be unfaithful; and if there were not somewhere on her part a failure to meet the conditions, surely peace would have been made before now. And she had thought herself all this while a subject for pity, not for blame; nay, for blame indeed, but not in this regard. Her mouth was stopped now. She rode home broken-hearted; would not see Mrs. Caxton at supper; and spent the evening and much of the night in weeping and self-searching. They were very downcast days that followed this day. Mrs. Caxton looked at her anxiously sometimes; never interfered with her.

Towards the end of the week there was preaching at Glanog, and the family went as usual. Eleanor rode by herself, going and coming, and held no communication with her aunt by the way. But late at night, some time after Mrs. Caxton had gone to bed, a white-robed figure came into her room and knelt down by the bedside.

"Is that you, Eleanor?"

"Aunt Caxton – it's all gone!"

"What?"

"My trouble. I came to tell you. It's all gone. I am so happy!"

"How is it, my dear child?"

"When Mr. Rhys was preaching to-night, it all came to me; I saw everything clearly. I saw how Jesus loves sinners. I saw I had nothing to do but to give myself to him, and he would do everything. I see how sins are forgiven through his blood; and I trust in it, and I am sure mine are; and I feel as if I had begun a new life, aunt Caxton!"

Eleanor's tears flowed like summer rain. Mrs. Caxton rose up and put her arms round her.

"The Lord be praised!" she said. "I was waiting for this, Eleanor."

"Aunt Caxton, I had been trying and thinking to make myself good first. I thought I was unworthy and unfit to be Christ's servant; but now I see that I can be nothing but unworthy, and only he can make me fit for anything; so I give up all, and I feel that he will do all for me. I am so happy! I was so blind before!"

Mrs. Caxton said little; she only rejoiced with Eleanor so tenderly as if she had been her own mother. Though that is speaking very coolly on the present occasion. Mrs. Powle had never shewed her daughter so much of that quality in her life, as Eleanor's aunt shewed now.

The breakfast next morning was unusually quiet. Happiness does not always make people talkative.

"How do you do, my love?" said Mrs. Caxton when they were left alone.

"After being up half the night?"

"More fresh than I have felt for a year, aunt Caxton. Did you hear that nightingale last night?"

"I heard him. I listened to him and thought of you."

"He sang – I cannot tell you what his song sounded like to me, aunt
Caxton. I could almost have fancied there was an angel out there."

"There were a great many rejoicing somewhere else. What glory to think of it!" They were silent again till near the end of breakfast; then Mrs. Caxton said, – "Eleanor, I shall be engaged the whole of this morning. This afternoon, if you will, I will go with you into the garden."

"This afternoon – is Wednesday, aunt Caxton."

"So it is. Well, before or after you go to the village, I want you to dress some dishes of flowers for me – will you?"

"With great pleasure, ma'am. And I can get some hawthorn blossoms, I know. I will do it before I go, ma'am."

Was it pleasant, that morning's work? Eleanor went out early to get her sprays of May blossoms; and in the tender beauty of the day and season was lured on and on, and tempted to gather other wild bits of loveliness, till she at last found her hands full, and came home laden with tokens of where she had been. "O'er the muir, amang the heather," Eleanor's walk had gone; and her basket was gay with gorse and broom just opening; but from grassy banks on her way she had brought the bright blue speedwell; and clematis and bryony from the hedges, and from under them wild hyacinth and white campion and crane's-bill and primroses; and a meadow she had passed over gave her one or two pretty kinds of orchis, with daisies and cowslips, and grasses of various kinds. Eleanor was dressing these in flower baskets and dishes, in the open gallery that overlooked the meadows, when Mrs. Caxton passing through on her own business stopped a moment to look at her.

"All those from your walk, my dear! Do you not mean to apply to the garden?"

"Aunty, I could have got a great many more, if I could have gone into the woods – but my walk did not lie that way. Yes, ma'am, I am going into the garden presently, when I have ordered these dishes well. Where are they to go, aunt Caxton?"

"Some in one place and some in another. You may leave them here, Eleanor, when they are done, and I will take care of them. Shall I have the garden flowers cut for you?"

"O no, ma'am, if you please!"

Mrs. Caxton stood a moment longer watching Eleanor; the pretty work and the pretty worker; the confusion of fair and sweet things around her and under her fingers, with the very fine and fair human creature busy about them. Eleanor's face was gravely happy; more bright than Mrs. Caxton had ever seen it; very much of kin to the flowers. She watched her a moment, and then went nearer to kiss Eleanor's forehead. The flowers fell from the fingers, while the two exchanged a look of mute sympathy; then on one part and on the other, business went forward.

Eleanor's work held her all the morning. For after the wild beauties had been disposed to her mind, there was another turn with their more pretentious sisters of the garden. Azaleas and honeysuckles, lilies of the valley, hyacinths and pomponium lilies, with Scotch roses and white broom, and others, made superb floral assemblages, out of doors or in; and Eleanor looked at her work lovingly when it was done.

So went the morning of that day, and Eleanor's ride in the afternoon was a fit continuation. May was abroad in the bursting leaves as well as in opening flowers; the breath of Eden seemed to sweep down the valley of Plassy. Ay, there is a partial return to the lost paradise, for those whom Christ leads thither, even before we get to the everlasting hills.

Eleanor this day was the first person addressed in the meeting. It had never happened so before. But now Mr. Rhys asked her first of all, "How do you do to-day?"

Eleanor looked up and answered, "Well. And all changed."

"Will you tell us how you mean?"

"It was when you were preaching last night. It all I came to me. I saw my mistake, when you told about I the love of Christ to sinners. I saw I had been trying to make myself good."

"And how is it now?"

"Now," – said Eleanor looking up again with full eyes, – "I will know nothing but Christ."

The murmur of thanksgiving heard from one or two voices brought her head down. It had nearly overcome her. But she controlled herself, and presently went on; though not daring to look again into Mr. Rhys's face, the expression of whose eyes of gladness was harder to meet than the spoken thanksgivings.

"I see I have nothing, and am nothing," she said. "I see that Christ is all, and will do all for me. I wish to be his servant. All is changed. The very hills are changed. I never saw such colours or such sunlight, as I have seen as I rode along this afternoon."

"A true judgment," said Mr. Rhys. "It has been often said, that the eye sees what the eye brings the means of seeing; and the love of Christ puts a glory upon all nature that far surpasses the glory of the sun. It is a changed world, for those who know that love for the first time! Friends, most of us profess to have that knowledge. Do we have it so that it puts a glory on all the outer world, in the midst of which we live and walk and attend to our business?"

"It does to me, sir," said the venerable old man whom Eleanor had noticed; – "it does to me. Praise the Lord!" Instead of any other answer they broke out singing, —

"O how happy are they
Who the Saviour obey,
And have laid up their treasure above.
Tongue can never express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love."

"The way to keep that joy," said Mr. Rhys returning to Eleanor, "and to know more of it, is to take every succeeding step in the Christian life exactly as you took the first one; – in self-renunciation, in entire dependence. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. It is a simple and humble way, the way along which the heavenly light shines. Do everything for Christ – do everything in his strength; – and you will soon know that the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. Blessed be his name! He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

It was easy to see that the speaker made a personal application here, with reference to himself; but after that there was no more said directly to Eleanor. The subject went round the circle, receiving the various testimony of the persons there. Eleanor's heart gave quick sympathy to many utterances, and took home with intent interest the answering counsels and remarks, which in some instances were framed to put a guard against self-deception or mistake. One or two of her neighbours when the exercises were over, came and took her hand, with a warm simple expression of feeling which made Eleanor's heart hot; and then she rode home.

"Did you have a pleasant time?" said her aunt.

"Aunt Caxton, I think that room where we meet is the pleasantest place in the world!"

"What do you think of the chapel at Glanog?"

"I don't know. I believe that is as good or better."

"Are you too tired to go out again?"

"Not at all. Who wants me?"

"Nanny Croghan is very sick. I have been with her all the afternoon; and Jane is going to sit up with her to-night; but Jane cannot go yet."

"She need not. I will stay there myself. I like it, aunt Caxton."

"Then I will send for you early in the morning."

Nanny Croghan lived a mile or two from the farmhouse. Eleanor walked there, attended by John with a basket. The place was a narrow dell between two uprising hills covered with heather; as wild and secluded as it is possible to imagine. The poor woman who lived there alone was dying of lingering disease. John delivered the basket, and left Eleanor alone with her charge and the mountains.

It was not a night like that she had spent by the bedside of her old nurse's daughter. Nanny was dying fast; and she needed something done for her constantly. Through all the hours of the darkness Eleanor was kept on the watch or actively employed, in administering medicine, or food, or comfort. For when Nanny wanted nothing else, she wanted that.

"Tell me something I can fix my mind onto," she would say. "It seems slipping away from me, like. And then I gets cold with fear."

Eleanor was new at the business; she had forgotten to bring her Bible with her, and she could find none in the house; "her sister had been there," Nanny said, "and had carried it away." Eleanor was obliged to draw on the slender stores of her memory; and to make the most of those, she was obliged to explain them to Nanny, and go them over and over, and pick them to pieces, and make her rest upon each clause and almost each word of a verse. There were some words that surely Eleanor became well acquainted with that night. For Nanny could sleep very little, and when she could not sleep she wanted talking incessantly. Eleanor urged her to accept the promises and she would have the peace. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

"Ay, but I never did fear him, you see, – till a bit agone; and now it's all fear. I fear furder'n I can see."

"Nanny, Nanny, the blood of Christ will take all that fear away – if only you will trust in it. He shed it for you – to pay your debts to justice. There is no condemnation to them which are in him."

Nanny did not know exactly what so big a word as condemnation meant; Eleanor was obliged to explain it; then what was meant by being "in Christ." Towards morning Nanny seemed somewhat soothed and fell into a doze. Eleanor went to the cottage door and softly opened it, to see how the night went.

The dawn was breaking fair over the hills, the tops of which shewed the unearthly brightness of coming day. It took Eleanor's eyes and thoughts right up. O for the night of darkness to pass away from this weary earth! Down in the valley the shadows lay thicker; how thick they lay about the poor head just now resting in sleep. How thick they lay but a day or two ago upon Eleanor herself! Now she looked up. The light was flushing upon the mountain tops every moment stronger. The dewy scents of the May morning were filling the air with their nameless and numberless tokens of rich nature's bounty. The voice of a cataract, close at hand, made merry down the rocks along with the song of the blackbird, woodpecker and titmouse. And still, as Eleanor stood there and looked and listened, the rush and the stir of sweet life grew more and more; the spring breeze wakened up and floated past her face bringing the breath of the flowers fresher and nearer; and the hill tops ever kindled into more and more glow. "It is Spring! and it is Day!" thought Eleanor, – "and so it is in my heart. The darkness is gone; the light is like that light, – promising more; my life is full of sweetness I never knew. Surely this month shall be the month of months to me for ever. O for this day – O for this morning – to waken over all the world!"

She stood there, for Nanny still slept, till the sunbeams struck the hills and crept down the sides of them; and till John and Jane came in sight round the angle of the road. John had brought the pony to take Eleanor home; and a few minutes' ride brought her there. Morning prayers were however done, before Eleanor could refresh herself with cold water and a change of dress. When she came down to the sitting-room Mrs. Caxton had stepped out on some business; and in her place, sitting alone with a book, Eleanor was greatly surprised to see Mr. Rhys.

He was not at all surprised to see her; rose up and gave her a very cordial grasp of the hand, and stirred up the wood fire; which, May morning though it was, the thick walls of the old stone house and the neighbourhood of the mountains made useful and agreeable. In silence and with a good deal of skill Mr. Rhys laid the logs together so that a fresh blaze sprang up; then after a remark upon the morning he went back to his book. Eleanor sat down, also silent, feeling very much delighted to see him there, and to think that they would have his company at breakfast; but not at all inclined, nor indeed competent, to open a conversation. She looked into the fire and wondered at the turns that

had brought about this meeting; wondered over the past year of her life; remembered her longing for the "helmet of salvation" which her acquaintance with Mr. Rhys had begun; and sang for joy in her heart that now she had it. Yes, it was hers, she believed; a deep rest and peace had taken place of craving and anxiety, such as even now disturbed poor dying Nanny. Eleanor felt very happy, in the midst of all her care for her. The fire burned beautifully.

"I was not aware," said Mr. Rhys looking up from his book, "I was not aware till last night that you lived with Mrs. Caxton."

Very odd, Eleanor thought; most people would have found out; however she took it simply.

"I am her niece."

"So I find, – so I am glad to find. I can wish nothing better for any one, in that kind, than to be connected with Mrs. Caxton."

He sat with his finger between the leaves of his book, and Eleanor again wondered at the silence; till Mrs. Caxton came in. It was not very flattering; but Eleanor was not troubled with vanity; she dismissed it with a thought compounded of good-humour and humility. At breakfast the talk went on pretty briskly; it was all between the other two and left her on one side; yet it was good enough to listen to it. Eleanor was well satisfied. Mr. Rhys was the principal talker; he was telling Mrs. Caxton of different people and things in the course of his labours; which constantly gave a reflex gleam of light upon those labours themselves and upon the labourer. Unconsciously of course, and merely from the necessity of the case; but it was very interesting to Eleanor, and probably to Mrs. Caxton; she looked so. At last she turned to her niece.

"How did you leave Nanny?"

"A little easier towards morning, I think; at least she went to sleep, which all the night she could not do."

"Nor you neither."

"O that's nothing. I don't mind that at all. It was worth watching, to see the dawn."

"Was the woman in so much pain?" Mr. Rhys asked.

"No; not bodily; she was uneasy in mind."

"In what way."

"Afraid of what lies before her; seeing dimly, if at all."

"Was she comforted by what you told her?"

"I had very little to tell her," said Eleanor; "I had no Bible; I had forgotten to take it; and hers was gone. I had to get what I could from memory, for I did not like to give her anything but the words of the Bible itself to ground hope upon."

"Yes, but a good warm testimony of personal experience, coming from the heart, often goes to the heart. I hope you tried that."

Eleanor had not; she was silent. The testimony she had given in the class-meeting somehow she had been shy of uttering unasked in the ear of the dying woman. Was that humility – or something else? Again Mr. Rhys had done for her what he so often did for her and for others – probed her thoughts.

"It is a good plan," said Mrs. Caxton, "to have a storehouse in one's memory of such things as may be needed upon occasion; passages of Scripture and hymns; to be brought out when books are not at hand. I was made to learn a great deal out of the Bible when I was a girl; and I have often made a practice of it since; and it always comes into play."

"I never set myself lessons to get by heart," said Mr. Rhys. "I never could learn anything in that way. Or perhaps I should say, I never*liked* to do it. I never did it."

"What is your art, then?" said Mrs. Caxton, looking curious.

"No art. It is only that when anything impresses itself strongly on my feelings, the words seem to engrave themselves in my memory. It is an unconscious and purely natural operation."

Eleanor remembered the multitudinous quoting of the Bible she had at different times heard from Mr. Rhys; and again wondered mentally. All that, all those parts of the Bible, he had not set himself to study, but had *felt* them into his memory! They had been put in like gold letters, with a hot iron.

"Where is this woman?" Mr. Rhys went on.

"She lives alone, in the narrow dell that stretches behind Bengarten Castle – and nearly in a straight line with it, from here. Do not go there this morning – you want rest, and it is too far for you to walk. I am going to take you into my garden, to see how my flowers go."

"Won't you take me into your dairy?"

"If you like it," said Mrs. Caxton smiling.

"I like it exceedingly. It is something like a musical box to me, Miss Powle, to see Mrs. Caxton's cheese-making. It soothes my nerves, the noiseless order of everything. Do you know that wonderful cheese-house, where they stand in ranks like yellow millstones? I never can get over my surprise at going in there. Certainly we, as a nation, are fond of cheese!"

"You think so because you are not," said Mrs. Caxton. "It is too late for the dairy to-day. You shall give me help in my garden, where I want it."

"I understand," says Mr. Rhys. "But it is my business to make flowers grow in the Lord's garden – wherever I can. I wish I could do more of*that* gardening work!"

Eleanor gave a quick glance up at the speaker. His brow rested on his hand for the moment; she noticed the sharply drawn lines of the face, the thin cheeks, the complexion, which all witnessed to *over*-work already attempted and done. The brow and eyes were marked with lines of watching and fatigue. It was but a glance, and Eleanor's eyes went down again; with an additional lesson of unconscious testimony carried deep home. This man lived as he talked. The good of existence was not one thing in his lips and another in his practice. Eleanor looked at her plate with her heart burning. In her old fancy for studying, or at least reading, hands, she had noticed too in her glance the hand on which the head rested; and with surprise. It was almost a feminine hand in make, with long slim fingers; white withal, and beautifully cared for. Certain refinements were clearly necessary to this man, who was ready to plunge himself into a country of savages nevertheless, where all the refinement would be his own. To some natures it would be easier to part with a hand altogether, than to forego the necessity of having it clean. This was one. And he was going to give himself up to Polynesia and its practices. Eleanor eat with the rest of her breakfast and swallowed with her tea, the remembered words of the apostle – "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." – "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to be faithful." – Eleanor's heart swelled. Tears were very near.

After breakfast, a large part of the morning was spent by her aunt and Mr. Rhys in the garden; as Mrs. Caxton had said; and very busy they were. Eleanor was not asked to join them, and she did not choose to volunteer; she watched them from the house. They were very honestly busy; planting and removing and consulting; in real garden work; yet it was manifest their minds had also much more in common, in matters of greater interest; they stood and talked for long intervals when the flowers were forgotten. They were very near each other, those two, evidently, in regard and mutual confidence and probably mutual admiration also. It was very strange Eleanor should never have come to the knowledge of it till to-day. And yet, why should she? She had never mentioned the name of Mr. Rhys to her aunt in any of her stories of Wiglands.

He was away all the afternoon and the evening, and came back again late; a tired and exhausted man. He said nothing, except to officiate at family prayers; but Eleanor was delighted that he was to spend the night at the farm and they would have him at breakfast. Only to see him and hear him talk to others, only the tones of his voice, brought up to her everything that was good and strong and pure and happy. He did not seem inclined to advance at all upon their Wiglands acquaintance. He made no allusion to it. As far as she was concerned, Eleanor thought that there was more reserve in

his manner towards her than he had shewed there. No matter. With Mrs. Caxton he was very much at home; and she could study him at her ease all the better for not talking to him.

CHAPTER II
WITH THE BASKET

"The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf or a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace."

"Mrs. Caxton," said Mr. Rhys the next morning, when half the breakfast had been passed in silence, "have you such a thing as a microscope in the house?"

"I am afraid not. Why do you ask?"

"Only, that I have suddenly discovered myself to be very ignorant, in a department of knowledge where it would be very pleasant as well as proper to be otherwise. I have been reading a book on some of the forms of life which are only to be known through the help of glasses; and I find there is a world there I know nothing about. That book has made a boy of me."

"How?" said Mrs. Caxton smiling.

"You think I always retain more or less of that character! Well – it has made me doubly a boy then; in my eagerness to put myself to school, on the one hand, and my desire to see something new on the other. Miss Powle, have you ever studied the invisible inhabitants of pools, and ponds, and sea-weeds?"

"Not at all," said Eleanor.

"You do not know much more than the names, then, of Infusoria,

Rotifera, and Pedunculata, and such things?"

"Not so much as the names – except Infusoria. I hope they are better than they sound."

"If the accounts are true – Mrs. Caxton, the world that we do not see, because of the imperfection of our organs, is even far more wonderful than the world that we do see. Perhaps it seems so, because of the finiteness of our own powers. But I never had a single thing give me such a view of the infinite glory of God, as one of the things detailed in that book – one of the discoveries of the microscope."

"His glory in creation," said Mrs. Caxton.

"More than that – There is to be sure the infiniteness of wisdom and of power, that makes your brain dizzy when you think of it; but there is an infinite moral glory also."

"What was the thing that struck you so much?" Eleanor inquired.

"It was a little fellow that lives in the water. He is not bigger than the diameter of the slenderest needle – and that is saying as much as I can for his size. This fellow builds himself a house of bricks, which he makes himself; and under his head he carries a little cup mould in which the bricks are made."

"Mr. Rhys," said Eleanor, "I am wondering what is the slenderest needle of your acquaintance!"

"No," said he laughing, "you are mistaken. I have seen my mother hem thin ruffles of muslin; and you know with what sort of a needle that should be done."

"Aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, "it is inconceivable!"

Mrs. Caxton did not make much answer, and the conversation turned. After breakfast, and after, as Eleanor judged, they had been a good while in the dairy, the two went out together in the car. Eleanor supposed it was to visit Nanny; and so she found when her aunt came home.

"I knew he would go," said Mrs. Caxton; "and then we made another call. Nanny is hopeful, and comfortable; but the other – Mr. Rhys came away very much agitated. He is not fit for it. I wish I could keep him from work for a few weeks. It's the best economy. But I will keep him here as long as I can, at least."

"Is he going to stay here?"

"Yes; he was not comfortably situated in the village; and now I will have him at the farm, I hope, till he goes. I shall trust you to keep the flowers fresh in his room, Eleanor. – No, my dear; Jane will stay with Nanny to-night."

So Mr. Rhys stayed at the farm, and certainly wanted for no comfort that the mistress of it could secure to him. Neither did Eleanor neglect the flowers. Mr. Rhys made his home there, and went out to his preaching and visiting and teaching as vigorously as ever; and was often a tired man when he came home. Nevertheless he gained ground, to Mrs. Caxton's great satisfaction. He grew stronger; and was less often a silent, prostrated, done-over member of their little circle. At first he was very often that. But when he felt well he was exceedingly social and conversational; and the Plassy farmhouse had never been so pleasant, nor the evenings and mornings and meal times so full of interest. In all which however Mrs. Caxton thought Eleanor took a very quiet part.

"You do not do your share, Eleanor," she said one day; "you are become nothing of a talker; and I can bear witness you had a tongue once. Has religion made you silent, my dear?"

"No, aunty," said Eleanor laughing; "but you forget – you have somebody else to talk to now."

"I am sure, and so have you."

"No ma'am – Mr. Rhys does not talk to me generally."

"I would return good for evil, then; and not silence for silence."

"I can't, aunty. Don't you know, there are some people that have a sort of quieting effect upon one?"

"I don't think anybody ever did upon me," said Mrs. Caxton; "and I am sure Mr. Rhys would be shocked if he knew the effect of his presence."

One morning Mrs. Caxton asked Mr. Rhys at breakfast if he had leisure to unpack a box for her. He said yes, with great alacrity; and Mrs. Caxton had the box brought in.

"What is it?" said Mr. Rhys as he began his work. "Am I to take care of china and glass – or to find gardener's plants nicely done up – or best of all, books?"

"I hope, something better yet," said Mrs. Caxton.

"There is a good deal of it, whatever it is," said Mr. Rhys, taking out one and another and another carefully wrapped up bit of something. "Curiosity can go no further!"

He stopped unpacking, and took the wrapping papers off one or two odd-looking little pieces of brass; paused, – then suddenly exclaimed, "Mrs. Caxton! – "

"Well?" said that lady smiling.

"It is just like you! I might have known the other morning what all that talk would end in."

Mrs. Caxton smiled in silence, and the gentleman went on with his unpacking; with added zeal and tenderness now, it was evident. It stood full in view at last, an exquisitely made and mounted microscope of one of the best London makers. Now was Mr. Rhys in his element; and proved how justly he had declared himself a *boy*. He got the microscope all into place and arranged, and then set himself to find out its powers and method of management.. There were some prepared objects sent with the instrument, which gave him enough to work with; and over them he was in an absorbed state for hours; not selfishly, however, for he allowed Eleanor to take her full share of the pleasure of looking, when once he had brought objects into view. At last he broke off and hurried away to an engagement.

The next day at breakfast, Eleanor was a good deal surprised to be asked if she would take a walk?

"Now?" said Eleanor. "You mean immediately after breakfast?"

"It is the only time I have to-day. All the time before dinner, I have; but I supposed we should want the whole of it. I am going after objects for the microscope – and I thought it would be selfish to go alone. Besides, we may help one another."

"I shall be very glad to go," said Eleanor laughing; "but don't expect any *help* of me; unless it be in the way of finding out such places as you want."

"I fancy I know those better than you do. Miss Powle, a small basket would be desirable to hold phials of water."

"And phials."

"I will take care of those."

Much amused, and a little excited, Eleanor made ready for the walk, and in the matter of the basket at least proved helpful. It was bright and early when they set out. Among those mountains and valleys, the dew was not off the fields yet, while the air was freshly sweet from roses and wild thyme, and primroses lingering, and numberless other sweet things; for hedgerow and meadow and mountain side were gay and rich with a multitude of flowers. There was a mingling of shadow and sunshine too, at that early time in the morning; and as the two walkers passed along they were sometimes in one, sometimes in the other. There was little conversation at first. Mr. Rhys went not with a lingering step, but as if with some purpose to reach a definite locality. Eleanor was musing to herself over the old walks taken with Julia by her present companion; never but once Eleanor's walking companion till now. How often Julia had gone with him; what a new and strange pleasure it was for herself; and how oddly life changes about things; that the impossible thing at Wiglands should be possible at Plassy.

"What sort of places are you looking for, Mr. Rhys?" Eleanor inquired at last.

"All sorts of places," he said smiling. "All sorts at least of wet places. But I know nothing about it, you know, except what I have read. They say, wherever water is found, some or other species of these minute wonders may be met with; standing pools, and rivers, and ditches all have them; and some particularly beautiful are to be found in bog water; so with, I am afraid you will think, a not very commendable impatience, I am pointing my steps towards a bog that I know – in the wish to get some of the best first."

"That is being very impatient," said Eleanor laughing. "I should be satisfied with almost anything, for the first."

"So you will very probably have to be. I am by no means sure of accomplishing my design. Am I walking too fast for you, in the meanwhile?"

"Not at all. I am thinking, Mr. Rhys, how we are to bring home the bog water when we have found it."

In answer to which, he put his hand in his pocket and brought out thence and deposited in his basket one after another of half a dozen or more little phials, all duly corked. Eleanor was very much amused.

"And what is this stick to do, that you wanted me to bring?"

"You will see."

The bog was reached in due time, after a walk over a most delicious country, for the most part new to Eleanor. Water was found, though not exactly with the conditions Mr. Rhys desired; however a phial of it was dipped up, corked and marked. Then they retraced their steps partially, diverging right and left. Just the right sort of pool was found at last; covered with duck-weed. Here Mr. Rhys stopped and tied one of the phials to the end of the stick. With this he dipped water from the surface, then he dipped from the bottom; he took from one side and from another side, where there was sunshine and where there was shade; pouring each dipping into a fresh phial, while Eleanor in a great state of amusement corked and labelled each as it was filled. At last it was done. Mr. Rhys filled his last phial, looked at Eleanor's face, and smiled.

"You do not think much is going to come of all this?" he said.

"Yes I do," said Eleanor. "At least I hope so."

"I know it. Look through that."

He put a pocket lens into her hand and bade her survey one of the phials with it. Eleanor's scepticism fled. That *something* was there, in pretty active life, was evident. Somethings. The kinds were plural.

"It was like Mrs. Caxton, to order this lens with the microscope," Mr. Rhys went on. "I suppose she made her order general – to include everything that would be necessary for a naturalist in making his observations. I not being a naturalist. Did you ever see the 'Bundle' of Helig?"

"I do not know what it is."

"'Bundle' or 'Bandel' – I do not know how it got the name, I am sure; but I suppose it is a corruption of something. Would you like to go a little out of your way to see it?"

"You can judge better than I, Mr. Rhys!" Eleanor said with her full, rich smile, which that gentleman had not often seen before. He answered it with his own very peculiar one, sober and sweet.

"I will take so much responsibility. You ought not to come so near and miss it."

Turning from the course of their return way, they followed a wild woody dell for a little distance; then making a sudden angle with that, a few steps brought them in sight of a waterfall. It poured over a rocky barrier of considerable height, the face of which was corrugated, as it were, with great projecting ridges of rock. Separated of necessity by these, the waters left the top of the precipice in four or five distinct bands or ribbands of bright wave and foam, soon dashed into whiteness; and towards the bottom of the fall at last found their way all together; which they celebrated with a rush and a dance and a sparkle and a roar that filled all the rocky abyss into which they plunged. The life, the brightness, the peculiar form, the wild surroundings, of this cataract made it a noted beauty. In front of it the rocks closed in so nearly that spectators could only look at it through a wild narrow gap. Above, beyond the top of the fall, the waving branches could be seen of the trees and bushes that stood on the borders of the water; to reach which was a mere impossibility, unless by taking a very long way round. At the foot, the waters turned off suddenly and sought their course where the eye could not follow them.

It was out of the question to talk in the presence of the shout of those glad waters. Mr. Rhys leaned against the rock, and looked at them, so motionless that more than once the eye of Eleanor went from them to him with a little note-taking. When at last he turned away and they got back into the stillness of the glen, he asked her, "how looking at such a thing made her feel?"

"Nothing but surprise and pleasure, I think," said Eleanor; "but a great deal of both those." Then as he still remained silent, she went on, – "To tell the truth, Mr. Rhys, I think my mental eye is only beginning to get educated. I used always to enjoy natural beauty, but I think it was in a superficial kind of way. Since I have been at Plassy – and especially since a few weeks back, – all nature is much more to me than it was."

"It is sure to be so," he said. "Nature without and nature within are made for each other; and till the two are set to the same key, you cannot have a good tune. – There is a fellow who is in pretty good order! Do you hear that blackbird?"

"Sweet!" said Eleanor. "And what is that other note – 'chee chee, chee,' so many times?"

"That is a green wren."

"You are *something* of a naturalist, Mr. Rhys," said Eleanor.

"Not at all! no more than my acquaintance with you and Mrs. Caxton makes me a philosopher."

Eleanor wanted to ask what looking at the cataract made *him* think of; but as she had told her aunt, Mr. Rhys exercised a sort of quieting influence over her. No natural audacity, of which she had an innocent share, remained to her in his company. She walked along in demure silence. And to say the truth, the sun was now growing warm, and the two had walked not a few good miles that morning; which also has a quieting influence. Eleanor queried with herself whether all the bright part of the walk were over.

"I think it is time we varied our attention," said Mr. Rhys breaking silence. "We have been upon one class of subjects a good while; – suppose we try another. Don't you want to rest?"

"I am not tired, – but I have no objection."

"You are not easily tired?"

"Not about anything I like."

"You have struck a great secret of power and usefulness," he said gravely. "What do you think of this bank? – it is dry, and it is pleasant."

It would have been hardly possible to find a spot in all their way that would not have been pleasant; and from this bank they looked over a wide rich valley bordered with hills. It was not the valley where the farmhouse of Plassy stood, with its meadows and river; this was different in its features, and moreover some miles distant. Eleanor and Mr. Rhys sat down on the moss at the foot of the trees, which gave both shade and rest. It was the edge of a piece of woods, and a blackbird was again heard saluting them.

"Now if you want refreshment," said Mr. Rhys, "I can give it to you; but only of one kind."

"I don't know – I should say of several kinds," said Eleanor looking into the basket – "but the quality doubtful."

"Did you think I meant *that?*"

Eleanor laughed at the earnest gravity of this speech. "Mr. Rhys, I saw no other refreshment you had to offer me; but indeed I do not want any – more than I am taking."

"I was going to offer it to you of another kind, but there is no kind like it. What is your way of reading the Bible?"

"I have no particular 'way,'" said Eleanor in some surprise. "I read several chapters a day – or at least always a chapter at morning and another at evening. What 'way' do you mean?"

"There are a great many ways; and it is good to use them all at different times. But what way would be good for a half hour's refreshment, at such a time as this?"

"I am sure, I don't know," said Eleanor. "I have no way but the one."

"Yes, but we should not have seen the 'Bandel' of Helig, if we had not turned aside to look at it; and you would not have heard the blackbird and the wren perhaps, unless you had stopped to listen to them. I suppose we have missed a million of other things, for want of looking."

"Yes, but we could not look at everything all along these miles of our way," said Eleanor, her smile breaking forth again.

"Very true. On the other hand, if we go but a very little way, we can examine all around us. Have you a Bible with you?"

"No. I never carry one."

"I am better off than you. Let us try a little of this – the first chapter of Romans. Will you read the first verse, and consider it."

He handed her his Bible and Eleanor read.

"'Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God' – "

"What do you find there?" said her companion.

"Not much. This verse seems to be a sort of opening, or introduction to the rest. Paul tells who he is, or what he is."

"And what does he say he is?"

"A servant of Jesus Christ."

"You think that is 'not much?'"

"Certainly it is much, in itself; but here I took it for a mere statement of fact."

"But what a fact. *A servant of Jesus Christ*. Only that! Do you know what a fact that is? What is it, to be a servant of Jesus Christ?"

Without waiting for the answer, which was not ready, Mr. Rhys rose up from his seat and began an abstracted exploration of the bit of woodland at the edge of which they had been sitting; wandering

in and out among the trees, and stooping now and then to pluck a flower or a fern or to examine one; apparently too full of his thoughts to be quiet. Eleanor heard him sometimes and watched him when she could; he was very busy; she wished he I would give some of his thoughts to her.

"I thought you wanted rest, Mr. Rhys," she said boldly, when she got a chance. "Please sit down here and take it, along with your other refreshment."

He smiled and came immediately with a bunch of Myosotis in his hand, which he threw into Eleanor's lap; and turning to her he repeated very seriously his question.

"What is it, to be a servant of Jesus Christ?"

"I know very little," said Eleanor timidly. "I am only just beginning to learn."

"You know the words bring for our refreshment only the meaning that we attach to them – except so far as the Holy Spirit answering our prayers and endeavours shews us new meaning and depth that we had not known before."

"Of course – but I suppose I know very little. These words convey only the mere fact to me."

"Let us weight the words. A servant is a follower. Christ said, 'If a man serve me, let him *follow me*.'"

"Yes, – I know."

"A follower must know where his Master goes. How did Christ walk?"

"He went about doing good."

"He did; but mark, there are different ways of doing that. Get to the root of the matter. The young man who kept all the commandments from his youth, was not following Christ; and when it came to the pinch he turned his back upon him."

"How then, Mr. Rhys? You mean heart-following?"

"That is what the Lord means. Look here – Paul says in the ninth verse, – 'Whom I serve *with my spirit* in the gospel' – Following cannot have a different end in view from that of the person followed. And what was Christ's? – 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.' Are we servants of Christ after that rule, Miss Powle?"

The question had a singular intonation, as if the questioner were charging it home upon himself. Yet Eleanor knew he could answer it in the affirmative and that she could not; she sat silent without looking up. The old contrast of character recurred to her, in spite of the fact that her own had changed so much. She hung over the book, while her companion half abstractedly repeated,

"'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.' – That makes a way of life of great simplicity."

"Is it always easy to find?" ventured Eleanor.

"Very! – if his will is all that we desire."

"But that is a very searching, deep question."

"Let it search, then. 'My meat is to do the will of him – ' No matter what that may be, Miss Powle; our choice lies in this – that it is his will. And as soon as we set our hearts upon one or the other particular sort of work, or labour in any particular place, or even upon any given measure of success attending our efforts, so that we are not willing to have him reverse our arrangements, – we are getting to have too much will about it."

Eleanor looked up with some effort.

"You are making it a great matter, to be a true servant of Christ, Mr.

Rhys."

"Would you have it a little matter?" he said with a smile of great sweetness and brightness. "Let the Lord have all! He was among us 'as one that serveth' – amid discouragements and disappointments, and abuse; and he has warned us that the servant is not greater than his Lord. It is not a little thing, to be the minister of Jesus Christ!"

"Now you are getting out of the general into the particular."

"No – I am not; a 'minister' is but a servant; what we call a minister, is but in a more emphatic degree the servant of all. The rules of service are the same for him and for others. Let us look at another one. Here it is – in John – "

And the fingers that Eleanor had watched the other morning, and with which she had a curious association, came turning over the leaves.

"'Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' – One thing is plain from that, Miss Eleanor – we are not to consider ourselves too good for anything."

"No – " said Eleanor; – "but I suppose that does not forbid a just judgment of ourselves or of others, in respect of their adaptations and qualifications."

"Yes it does," he said quickly. "The only question is, Has the Lord put that work in your hands? If he has, never ask whether your hands are the right ones. He knows. What our Lord stooped to do, well may we!"

Eleanor dared not say any more; she knew of what he was thinking; whether he had a like intuition with respect to her thoughts she did not know, and would not risk them any nearer discovery.

"There is another thing about being a servant of Christ," he presently went on; – "it ensures some kind and degree of persecution."

"Do you think so?" said Eleanor; "in these days? Why, it is thought praiseworthy and honourable, is it not, through all the land, to be good? to be a member of the Church, and to fulfil the requirements of religion? Does anybody lose respect or liking from such a cause?"

"No. But he suffers persecution. My dear friend, what are the 'requirements of religion?' We are just considering them. Can you remember a servant of Christ, such as we have seen the name means, in your knowledge, whom the world allowed to live in peace?"

Eleanor was silent.

"'Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.'"

"But in *these* days, Mr. Rhys?" said Eleanor doubtfully.

"I can only say, that if you are of the world, the world will love his own. I know no other way of securing that result. 'Because ye are not of the world,' Jesus said, 'but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' And it is declared, elsewhere, that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Can you remember any instance to the contrary?"

Eleanor looked up and gave Mr. Rhys a good view of her honest eyes; they looked very intent now and somewhat sorrowful.

"Mr. Rhys, except in Plassy, I do not know such a person as you ask me about."

"Is it possible!" he said.

"Mr. Rhys, I was thinking the servants of Christ have good need of that 'helmet of salvation' I used to wish for."

"Well, they have it!" he said brightly. "'If any man serve me, let him follow me; *and where I am, there shall also my servant be*.' That is the end of all. But there is another point of service that occurs to me. We have seen that we must not lease ourselves; I recollect that in another place Paul says that if he pleased men, he would not be the servant of Christ. There is a point where he and the world would come in contact of opposition."

"But I thought we ought to please everybody as much as we could?"

He smiled, put his hand over and turned two or three leaves of the Bible which she kept open at the first of Romans, and pointed to a word in the fifteenth chapter. "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to edification."

"There is your limit," said he. "So far thou mayest go, but no further. And to do that you will find requires quite sufficiently that you should not please yourself. And now how shall we do all this? – how shall we be all this?"

"You are asking the very question!" said Eleanor gravely.

"We must come to the root and spring of all this service and following – it is our love of the Lord himself. That will do it, and nothing else will. 'What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.'"

"But suppose," said Eleanor, with some difficulty commanding her voice, – "suppose one is deficient in that very thing? suppose one wants that love?"

"Ay!" he said, looking into her face with his eyes of light, – "suppose one does; what then?"

Eleanor could not bear them; her own eyes fell. "What is one to do?" – Mr. Rhys had risen up before he answered, in his deliberate accents,

"'Seek him, that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of night into morning.'"

He paced slowly up and down before Eleanor; then went off upon a rambling search through the wood again; seeming to be busy with little things in his way. Eleanor sat still. After a little he came and stood before her with a bunch of ferns and Melic grass and lilies of the valley, which he was ordering in his hands as he spoke.

"The effect of our following Christ in this way, Miss Powle, will be, that we shall bear testimony to the world that He is our King, and what sort of a king he is. We shall proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. We shall have the invisible army of angels for our fellow-servants and co-workers; and we shall be passing on with the whole redeemed world to the day of full triumph and final restoration; when Christ will come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in them that believe – because our testimony among you was believed. But now our business is to give the testimony."

He walked up and down, up and down, before Eleanor for some minutes, in a thoughtful, abstracted way. Eleanor felt his manner as much as his words; the subject had clearly gone home to himself. She felt both so much that she did not like to interrupt the silence, nor to look up. At last he stopped again before her and said in quite a different tone, "What are the next words, Miss Powle?"

"'Called to be an apostle.'"

"We shall not get home to dinner, if we go into that," he said smiling.

"You have preached a sermon to me, Mr. Rhys."

"I do that very often to myself," he answered.

"To yourself?" said Eleanor.

"Yes. Nobody needs it more."

"But when you have so much real preaching to do – I should think it would be the last thing you would wish to do in private, – at other times."

"For that very reason. I need to have a sermon always ready, and to be always ready myself. Now, let us get home and look at our 'rotifera' – if we have any."

However, there was to be no microscopical examination that morning.

"The best laid schemes o' mice and men Gang aft agley."

They had gone but half a mile further homeward when their course was again stopped. They came up with a man and a horse; the horse standing still, the man lying on the ground beside him. At first sight they thought it was a case of drunkenness, for the face of the man was very red and he was unable to give any account of himself; but they were soon convinced it was sudden illness, not intoxication, which was the matter. He had fallen from his horse evidently, and now was not unconscious but in great pain; the red in his face alternating with sudden changes of colour. Apparently his condition was that of a small farmer or upper farm servant, who had been overtaken on some business errand by this attack of severe sickness. His horse stood quietly beside him.

"This is no case for a lancet," said Mr. Rhys after making a slight examination. "It calls for greater skill than mine. How will you do? I must take the horse and ride for it. But the first thing is to find where I ought to go – if I can – "

For this information he sought in the man's pockets; and found presently a pocket-book with one or two bills, which gave the name he wanted. It was a name not unknown to Mr. Rhys; and let him know also the direction in which he must ride; not towards the valley of Plassy.

"What will you do, Miss Powle? – will you be afraid to find your way home alone?"

"I will stay here till you come back."

"Will you? But I may be gone some time – and I must tell you," he said gravely, "the man is very ill."

"There is the more reason then, I am sure. I will stay and do anything for him I can, Mr. Rhys. You go – I will stay here."

Mr. Rhys said nothing more, though Eleanor felt sure from his face that he did not disapprove of her conclusion. He mounted the horse immediately.

"I will send help from the way if I can, though I doubt it. The way is lonely, till I get almost there."

He rode off at a sharp pace, and Eleanor was left quite alone. Her attention came back to the sick person at her feet. So near the light-hearted pleasure of ten minutes ago had been to pain and death! And Mr. Rhys's sermon was nearer still. The first thing to consider, was what she could do for the man.

He had fallen and lay on the grass in the broad sunshine. The sun had mounted high now; its beams fell hot and full on the sufferer's face. At a little distance was a grove of oaks and beeches, and good shelter; but Eleanor's strength could not move the man thither; he was a great, thickset, burly fellow. Yet it was miserable to see the sun beating upon his face where the sweat of pain already stood. Eleanor went to the wood, and with much trouble and searching managed to find or break off two or three sticks of a few feet in length. She planted these for a frame near the sick man's head and spread her light summer shawl over them to make a screen. It was a light screen; nevertheless much better than nothing. Then Eleanor kneeled down by the man to see what more she could do. Red and pale changed fast and fearfully upon his face; big drops stood on the brow and cheeks. Eleanor doubted whether he were conscious, he lay so still. She took her pocket-handkerchief to wipe the wet brow. A groan answered her at that. It startled her, for it was the first sound she had heard the sick person utter. Putting down her face to receive if possible some intimation of a wish, she thought he said or tried to say something about "drink." Eleanor rose up and sought to recollect where last and nearest she had seen water. It was some distance behind; a little spring that had crossed their foot-way with its own bright track. Then what could she bring some in? The phials! Quick the precious pond water and bog water was poured out, with one thought of the nameless treasures for Mr. Rhys's microscope that she was spilling upon the ground; and Eleanor took the basket again and set off on the backward way. She was in a hurry, the sun was warm, the distance was a good quarter of a mile; by the time she had found the stream and filled her phial and retraced again her steps to where the sick man lay, she was heated and weary; for every step was hurried with the thought of that suffering which the water might alleviate. This was pure, sparkling, good water with which the phials were now filled. But when Eleanor got back to him, the man could not open his lips to take it. She feared he would die, and suddenly.

It was a wild uncultivated place they were in. No signs of human habitation were to be seen, except far up away on a hillside in the distance, where smoke went up from a farmhouse or some sort of a house; towards which Eleanor looked with earnest longings that the human help which was there could be brought within available distance. It was greatly too far for that. How soon would Mr. Rhys be back? Impossible to say; she could not tell what length of road he might have to travel. And the man seemed dying. Eleanor knelt down again, and with the precious contents of one of the phial

bathed the brow and the lips that she thought would never return to their natural colour again. She did it perseveringly; it was all she could do. Perhaps it gave comfort. But Eleanor grew tired, and felt increasingly lonely and desirous that some one should come. No one did come by that way, nor was likely to come, until the return of Mr. Rhys; the place was not near a highway; only on a wild mountain track. It struck Eleanor then that the sufferer's head lay too low, upon the ground. She could not move him to a better position; and finally placing herself on the grass beside him, she contrived with great exertion to lift his head upon her lap. He could not thank her; she did not know if he were aware of what she did; but then Eleanor had done all. She schooled herself to sit patiently and wipe the brow that lay upon her knee, and wait; knowing that death might come to take her charge before any other arrival relieved her of it. Eleanor had a great many thoughts meanwhile; and as she sat there revolved Mr. Rhys's 'sermon' in her mind over and over, and from one end to the other and back again.

So at last Mr. Rhys found her. He came as he had gone, full speed; jumped off his horse, and took a very grave survey of the group on the ground. It was not early. Mr. Rhys had been a long time away; it seemed half a day's length to Eleanor.

"Have you been there all this time?" was his question.

"O no."

"I will take your place," said he kneeling down and lifting the unconscious head from Eleanor's lap. "There is a waggon coming. It will be here directly."

Eleanor got up, trembling and stiff from her long constrained position. The waggon presently came in sight; a huge covered wain which had need to move slowly. Mr. Rhys had stayed by it to guide it, and only spurred forward when near enough to the place. Into it they now lifted the sick man, and the horses' heads were turned again. Mr. Rhys had not been able to bring a doctor.

"Why here is Powis!" exclaimed Eleanor, as on the waggon coming round she discovered her pony hitched to the back of it. Mr. Rhys unhitched him. Powis was saddled.

"I thought you would have done enough for to-day," said he; "and I went round by the farm to bring him. Now you will ride home as fast as you please."

"But I thought the farm was out of your way?"

"I had time to gallop over there and meet the waggon again; it went so slowly."

"O thank you! But I do not need Powis – I can walk perfectly well. I am sure you need him more than I do, Mr. Rhys. I do not need him at all."

"Come, mount!" said he. "I cannot ride on a side saddle, child."

Eleanor mounted in silence, a little surprised to find that Mr. Rhys helped her not awkwardly; and not knowing exactly whence came a curious warm glow that filled her heart like a golden reflection. But it kept her silent too; and it did not go away even when Mr. Rhys said in his usual manner,

"I beg your pardon, Miss Powle – I live among the hills till I grow unceremonious."

Eleanor did not make any answer, and if she rode home as fast as she pleased, it was her pleasure to ride slowly; for Mr. Rhys walked beside her all the way. But she was too tired perhaps to talk much; and he was in one of his silent moods.

"What have you done with the phials?" said he looking into the basket as they neared home.

"I am very sorry, Mr. Rhys! I had to empty them to get water for that poor man. I wasn't quite sure, but I thought he asked for it."

"Oh! – And where did you go to find water?"

"Back – don't you remember? – some distance back of where we found him, we had passed a little brook of running clear water. I had to go there."

"Yes – I know. Well, we shall have to make another expedition."

CHAPTER III
AT HOME

"I will have hopes that cannot fade,
For flowers the valley yields!
I will have humble thoughts instead
Of silent, dewy fields!
My spirit and my God shall be
My sea-ward hill, my boundless sea."

The promised expedition came off; and a number of others; not too frequently however, for Mr. Rhys continued to be one of the world's busy people, and was often engaged and often weary. The walks after natural history came between times; when he was not under the immediate pressure of duty, and felt that he needed recreation to fit him for it. Eleanor was his companion generally, and grew to be as much interested in his objects as he was himself. Perhaps that is saying too much. In the house certainly Mr. Rhys bestowed an amount of patient time and investigation upon his microscopical studies which Eleanor did not emulate; time and pains which made him presently a capital manipulator, and probably stowed away quantities of knowledge under that quiet brow of his. Many an hour Mr. Rhys and his microscope were silent companions, during which he was rapt and absorbed in his contemplations or his efforts – whichever it might be; but then at other times, and before and after these times, Eleanor and Mrs. Caxton were constantly invited to a share in some of the results at least of what was going on.

Perhaps three people rarely enjoy more comfort together in themselves and in each other, than these three did for some weeks following the date of the last chapter. Mr. Rhys was a wonderful pleasant addition to the family. He was entirely at home, and not a person be trammelled by any ordinary considerations. He was silent when he felt like it; he kept alone when he was busy; he put no unnatural force upon himself when he was fatigued; but silent, or weary, or busy, there was always and at all times where he was, the feeling of the presence of one who was never absent from God. It was in the atmosphere about him; it was in the look that he wore, free and simple as that always was, in its gravity; it was in the straightforward doing of duty, all little things as much as in great things; the little things never forgotten, the great things never waived. It was an unconscious testimony that Mr. Rhys carried about with him; and which his companions seeing, they moved about with softened steps and strengthened hearts all the while. But he was not always tired and silent; and when he was not, he was a most delightful companion, as free to talk as a child and as full of matter as a wise man; and entirely social and sympathetic too in his whole temper and behaviour. He would not enjoy his natural historical discoveries alone; Mrs. Caxton and Eleanor were made to take their full share. The family circle was, quietly, a very lively one; there was no stagnating anywhere. He and Mrs. Caxton had many subjects and interests in common of which they talked freely, and Eleanor was only too glad to listen. There were books and reviews read aloud sometimes, with very pithy discussion of the same; in fact, there was conversation, truly deserving the name; such as Eleanor never listened to before she came to Plassy, and which she enjoyed hugely. Then the walks after natural objects were on the whole frequent; and Mr. Rhys was sure to ask her to go along; and they were full of delightful pleasure and of nice talk too, though it never happened that they sat down under a tree again to sermonize and Mr. Rhys never forgot himself again to speak to her by the undignified appellation he once had given her. But Eleanor had got over her shyness of him pretty well, and was inclined to think it quite honour and pleasure enough to be allowed to share his walks; waited very contentedly when he was wrapped

up in his own thoughts; wrapped herself up in hers; and was all ready for the talk when it came. With all this she observed that he never distinguished her by any more familiarity than Mrs. Caxton's niece and his daily neighbour at the table and in the family, might demand from a gentleman and Mrs. Caxton's friend and guest. The hills and the valleys around Plassy were very beautiful that summer.

So was Mrs. Caxton's garden. The roses flushed out into bloom, with all their contemporaries; the terraces down to the river were aglow with richness and profusion of blossoms, and sweet with many fragrances. The old farmhouse itself had become an object of admiration to Eleanor. Long and low, built of dark red stone and roofed with slate, it was now in different parts wreathed and draped in climbing roses and honeysuckle as well as in the ivy which did duty all winter. To stand under these roses at the back of the house, and look down over the gorgeous terraces, to the river and the bridge and the outspread meadows on the other side, stretching away down and up the valley and reaching to the foot of the hills which rose beyond them; to see all this, was to see a combination of natural features rare even in England, though words may not make it seem so.

Mrs. Caxton and Eleanor were there one evening. It was towards the end of the season of "June roses," though indeed it was later than the month of June. Mr. Rhys had been called away to some distance by business, and been detained a week; and this evening he might be expected home. They had missed him very much, Mrs. Caxton and Eleanor. They had missed him exceedingly at prayer-time; they had missed him desolately at meals. To-night the tea-table was spread where he loved to have it; on the tiled floor under the projecting roof before mentioned. A dish was crowned with red and white strawberries in the middle of the table, and Eleanor stood decorating it slowly with ivy leaves and blossoms of white heath.

"It is not certain, my dear, he will come home to-night," Mrs. Caxton said as she watched her.

"No, aunty," – said Eleanor with a slight start, but then going on with her occupation. "What about it?"

"Nothing. We will enjoy the flowers ourselves."

"But he thought he would be at home to-night, aunt Caxton?"

"He could not be sure. He might easily be detained. You have got over your fear of Mr. Rhys, Eleanor?"

"Aunt Caxton, I don't think I ever feared him!"

"He used to have a 'quieting influence' upon you," Mrs. Caxton said smiling.

"Well, – he does now, ma'am. At least I am sure Mr. Rhys is one of the persons I should never care to contradict."

"I should think not," said Mrs. Caxton quietly. Eleanor had coloured a little.

"But that is not because, merely, I do not think myself wise; because there are other persons before whom I think myself no wiser, whom I*would* contradict – I mean, in a polite way – if it came into my head."

"We shall miss him when he goes," said Mrs. Caxton with a little bit of a sigh. Eleanor wanted to ask a question, but the words did not come. The ornamenting of the strawberry dish was finished. She turned from it, and looked down where the long train of cows came winding through the meadows and over the bridge. Pretty, peaceful, lovely, was this gentle rural scene; what was the connection that made but a step in Eleanor's thoughts between the meadows of Plassy and some far-off islands in distant Polynesia? Eleanor had changed since some time ago. She could understand now why Mr. Rhys wanted to go there; she could comprehend it; she could understand how it was that he was not afraid to go and did not shrink from leaving all this loveliness at her feet. All that was no mystery now; but her thoughts fastened on her aunt's words – how they would "miss him." She was very still, and so was Mrs. Caxton; till a step brought both heads round to the door.

It was only a servant that came out, bringing letters; one for Eleanor, one for Mrs. Caxton. Standing where she was, Eleanor broke hers open. It was from her mother, and it contained something both new and unexpected; an urgent injunction on her to return immediately home. The family were

going at once to Brighton, the letter said; Mrs. Powle wished Eleanor to lose no time, in order that her wardrobe might be properly cared for. Thomas was sent with the letter, and her mother desired that Eleanor would immediately on the receipt of it, "without an hour's delay," set off to come home with him. Reasons for this sudden proceeding there were none given; and it came with the suddenness of a hurricane upon Eleanor. Up to this time there had been no intimation of her mother's wish to have her at home again ever; an interval of several weeks had elapsed since any letters; now Mrs. Powle said "she had been gone long enough," and they all wanted her, and must have her at once to go to Brighton. So suddenly affectionate?

Eleanor stood looking at her letter some time after she had ceased to read it, with a face that shewed turmoil. Mrs. Caxton came up to her. Eleanor dropped the letter in her hand, but her eye avoided her aunt's.

"What is all this haste, Eleanor?" Mrs. Caxton said gravely.

"I don't know, ma'am."

"At any rate, my child, you cannot leave me to-night. It is too late."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Does your mother assign no reason for this sudden demand of you? She gives me none."

"She gives me none, ma'am."

"Eleanor – "

It brought Eleanor's eye up, and that brought her head down on Mrs. Caxton's shoulder. Her aunt clasped her tenderly for a moment, and then said,

"Had you not better see your mother's servant, my dear, and give your orders? – and then we will have tea."

Eleanor steadied herself immediately; went out and had an interview with old Thomas, which however brought her no enlightenment; made her arrangements with him, and returned to her aunt. Mrs. Caxton ordered tea; they would not wait for Mr. Rhys any longer. The aunt and niece sat down to the table behind the honeysuckle drapery of the pillars; the sunlight had left the landscape; the breath of the flowers floated up cool and sweet from the terraced garden and waved about them with every stir of the long rose and honeysuckle sprays. Eleanor sat by the table and looked out. Mrs. Caxton poured out the tea and looked at her.

"Aren't you going to take some strawberries, my love?"

"Shall I give you some, aunt Caxton?"

"And yourself, my dear."

She watched while Eleanor slowly broke up the heath and ivy adornment of the strawberry dish, and carefully afterwards replaced the sprays and leaves she had dislodged. It is no harm for a lady's hand to be white; but travelling from the hand to the face, Mrs. Caxton's eye found too little colour there. Eleanor's cheeks were not generally wanting in a fine healthy tinge. The tinge was fainter than usual to-night. Nevertheless she was eating strawberries with apparent regularity.

"Eleanor, I do not understand this sudden recall. Have you any clue?"

"No ma'am, not the least."

"What arrangements have you made, my dear?"

"For to-morrow morning, ma'am. I had no choice."

"No, my dear, you had not; and I have not a word to say. I hope Mr.

Rhys will come back before you go."

Absolute silence on Eleanor's part.

"You would like to bid him good bye before you leave Plassy."

There was a cessation of any attention to the strawberries, and

Eleanor's hand took a position which rather hindered observations of her face. You might have heard a slight little sigh come from behind

Mrs. Caxton's tea-pot.

"Eleanor, have you learned that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord? My love, they are not left to our own disposal, and we should not know how to manage it. You are going to do the Lord's work, are you not, wherever you may be?"

"I hope so."

"Then trust him to place you where he wants the work to be done. Can you, Eleanor?"

Eleanor left her seat, came round and knelt down by Mrs. Caxton's side, putting her face in her lap.

"It is not like a good soldier, dear, to wish to play general. You have something now to do at home – perhaps not more for others than for yourself. Are you willing to do it?"

"Don't ask me if I am willing, aunt Caxton! I have been too happy – But

I shall be willing."

"That is all we live for, my dear – to do the Lord's work; and I am sure that in service as in everything else, God loves a cheerful giver. Let us give him that now, Eleanor; and trust him for the rest. My child, you are not the only one who has to give up something."

And though Mrs. Caxton said little more than that word on the subject of what Eleanor's departure cost herself, she manifested it in a different way by the kind incessant solicitude and care with which she watched over Eleanor and helped her and kept with her that night and the next morning. Eleanor made her preparations and indulged in very few words. There was too much to think of, in the last evening's society, the last night in her happy room, the last morning hours. And yet Eleanor did very little thinking. She was to go immediately after breakfast. The early prayers were over, and the aunt and niece were left by themselves a moment before the meal was served.

"And what shall I say to Mr. Rhys?" enquired Mrs. Caxton, as they stood silent together. Eleanor hesitated, and hesitated; and finally said,

"I believe, nothing, ma'am."

"You have given me messages for so many other people, you know," said

Mrs. Caxton quietly.

"Yes, ma'am. I don't know how to make a message for him."

"I think he will feel it," said Mrs. Caxton in the same manner.

Then she saw, for her eyes were good, the lightning flash of emotion which worked in Eleanor's face. Proud self-control kept it down, and she stood motionless, though it did not prevent the perceptible paling of her cheek which Mrs. Caxton had noticed last night. She stood silent, then she said slowly, —

"If I thought *that*– You may give him any message for me that you think good, aunt Caxton."

The breakfast arrived, and few more words passed on any topic. Another hour, and Eleanor was on her journey.

She felt in a confusion of spirits and would not let herself think, till they reached her stopping place for the night. And then, instead of thinking, Eleanor to say the truth could do nothing but weep. It was her time for tears; to-morrow would end such an indulgence. At an early hour the next day she met her father's carriage which had been sent so far for her; and the remaining hours of her way Eleanor did think. Her thoughts are her own. But at the bottom of some that were sorrowful lay one deep subject of joy. That she was not going helmet-less into the fight which she felt might be before her. Of that she had an inward presentiment, though what form it would take she was entirely uncertain.

Julia was the first person that met her, and that meeting was rapturous.

"O Nell! it has been so dreadful and dull since you have been gone! I'm so glad to have you home! I'm so glad to have you home!" – she repeated, with her arms round Eleanor's neck.

"But what are you going to Brighton for?" said Eleanor after the first salutations had satisfied the first eagerness of the sisters.

"O I don't know. Papa isn't just well, I believe; and mamma thought it would do him good. Mamma's in here."

It was to Eleanor's relief that her reception in this quarter also was perfectly cordial. Mrs. Powle seemed to have forgotten, or to be disposed to forget, old causes of trouble; and to begin again as if nothing had happened.

"You look well, Eleanor. Bless me, I never saw your complexion better! but how your hair is dressed! That isn't the way now; but you'll get to rights soon. I've got a purple muslin for you that will be beautiful. Your whole wardrobe will want attention, but I have everything ready – dress-maker and all – only waiting for you. Think of your being gone seven months and more! But never mind – we'll let bygones be bygones. I am not going to rake up anything. We'll go to Brighton and have everything pleasant."

"How soon, mamma?"

"Just as soon as I can get you dressed. And Eleanor! I wish you would immediately take a review of all your wardrobe and all I have got for you, and see if I have omitted anything."

"What has put you into the notion of Brighton, mamma?"

"Everybody is there now – and we want a change. I think it will do your father good."

To see her father was the next thing; and here there was some comfort. The squire was undoubtedly rejoiced to see his daughter and welcomed her back right heartily. Made much of her in his way. He was the only one too who cared much to hear of Mrs. Caxton and her way of life and her farm. The squire did care. Eleanor was kept a long time answering questions and giving details. It cost her some hard work.

"She is a good woman, is my sister Caxton," said the Squire; "and she has pluck enough for half a dozen. The only thing I have against her is her being a Methodist. She hasn't made a Methodist of you, hey, Eleanor?"

"I don't think she has, papa," Eleanor answered slowly.

"That's the only fault *I* have to find with her," the Squire went on; "but I suppose women must have an empty corner of their heads, where they will stick fancies if they don't stick flowers. I think flowers are the most becoming of the two. Wears a brown gown always, don't she?"

"No, sir."

"I thought they did," said the Squire; "but she's a clever woman, for all that, or she wouldn't carry on that business of the farm as she does. Your mother don't like the farm; but I think my sister is right. Better be independent and ask leave of nobody. Well, you must get dressed, must you. I am glad to have you home, child!"

"Why are we going to leave home, papa?"

"St. George and the Dragon! Ask your mother."

So Eleanor did not get much wiser on the subject till dinner-time; nor then either, though it was nearly the only thing talked about, both directly and indirectly. A great weariness came over her, as the contrast rose up of Mrs. Caxton's dinner-table and the three faces round it; with the sweet play of talk, on things natural or philosophical, religious or civil, but always sensible, fresh, and original and strong. Always that; the party might lapse into silence; if one of them was tired it often did; but when the words came again, they came with a ready life and purpose – with a sort of perfume of love and purity – that it made Eleanor's heart ache now to think of. Her mother was descanting on lodgings, on the people already at Brighton, or coming there; on dresses ready and unready; and to vary this topic the Squire complained that his wine was not cooled properly. Eleanor sank into silence and then into extreme depression of spirits; which grew more and more, until she caught her little sister's eye looking at her wistfully. Julia had hardly said a word all dinner-time. The look smote Eleanor's conscience. "Is this the way I am doing the work given me?" she thought; "this selfish forgetting of all others in myself? Am I standing in my post like a good soldier? Is *this* 'pleasing all men for their good?'" Conscience thumped like a hammer; and Eleanor roused up, entered into what was going,

talked and made herself pleasant to both father and mother, who grew sunshiny under the influence. Mrs. Powle eat the remainder of her dinner with more appetite; and the Squire declared Eleanor had grown handsome and Plassy had done her no harm. But Julia looked and listened and said never a word. It was very hard work to Eleanor, though it brought its reward as she went along, not only in comments but in the sense of duty performed. She would not run away from her post; she kept at it; when her father had gone away to smoke she stayed by her mother; till Mrs. Powle dropped off into her usual after dinner nap in her chair. Eleanor sat still a minute or two longer, then made an escape. She sought her old garden, by the way of her old summer parlour. Things were not changed there, except that the garden was a little neglected. It brought painful things back, though the flowers were sweet and the summer sunset glow was over them all. So it used to be in old times. So it used to be in nearer times, last summer. And now was another change. Eleanor paced slowly down one walk and up another, looking sorrowfully at her old friends, the roses, carnations and petunias, which looked at her as cheerfully as ever; when a hand touched hers and she found Julia at her side.

"Eleanor," she said wistfully, "are you *sorry* to be at home again?"

"I am glad to see you, darling; and papa, and mamma."

"But you don't look glad. Was it so much pleasanter where you have been?"

Eleanor struggled with herself.

"It was very different, Julia – and there were things that you and I both love, that there are not here."

"What?"

"Here all is for the world, Julia; there, at Plassy, nothing is for the world. I feel the difference just at first – I suppose I shall get a little used to it presently."

"I have not thought so much about all that," said Julia soberly, "since

Mr. Rhys went away. But you must have loved aunt Caxton very much,

Eleanor, to make you sorry to come home."

Julia spoke almost sadly. Eleanor felt bitterly reproached. Was there not work at home here for her to do! Yet she could hardly speak at first. Putting her arm round Julia she drew her down beside her on a green bank and took her little sister in her arms.

"You and I will help each other, Julia, will we not?"

"In what?"

"To love Christ, and please him."

"Why, do you love him?" said Julia. "Are you like Mr. Rhys?"

"Not much. But I do love the same Master he loves, Julia; and I have come home to serve him. You will help me?"

"Mamma don't like all that," remarked Julia.

Eleanor sighed. The burden on her heart seemed growing heavy. Julia half rose up and putting both arms round her neck covered her lips with kisses.

"You don't seem like yourself!" she said; "and you look as grave as if you had found us all dead. Eleanor – are you afraid?" she said with an earnest look.

"Afraid of what, dear?"

"Of that man – afraid of Mr. Carlisle?"

"No, I am not afraid of him, or of anything. Besides, he is hundreds of miles away, in Switzerland or somewhere."

"No he isn't; he is here."

"What do you mean by 'here?'"

"In England, I mean. He isn't at the Priory; but he was here at the

Lodge the other day."

Eleanor's heart made two or three springs one way and another.

"No dear, I am not afraid of him," she repeated, with a quietness that was convincing; and Julia passed to other subjects. Eleanor did not forget that one; and as Julia ran on with her talk, she pondered it, and made a secret thanksgiving that she was so escaped both from danger and from fear. Nevertheless she could not help thinking about the subject. It seemed that Mr. Carlisle's wound had healed very rapidly. And moreover she had not given him credit for finding any attraction in that house, beyond her own personal presence in it. However, she reflected that Mr. Carlisle was busy in politics, and perhaps cultivated her father. They went in again, to take up the subject of Brighton.

And what followed? Muslins, flowers, laces, bonnets and ribbands. They were very irksome days to Eleanor, that were spent in getting ready for Brighton; and the thought of the calm purity of Plassy with its different occupations sometimes came over her and for the moment unnerved her hands for the finery they had to handle. Once Eleanor took a long rambling ride alone on her old pony; she did not try it again. Business and bustle was better, at least was less painful, than such a time for thinking and feeling. So the dresses were made, and they went to Brighton.

CHAPTER IV
AT A WATERING-PLACE

"In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!"

Eleanor was at once plunged into a whirl of engagements, with acquaintances new and old. And the former class multiplied very rapidly. Mrs. Powle's fair curls hung on either side of her face with almost their full measure of complacency, as she saw and beheld her daughter's successful attractions. It was true. Eleanor was found to have something unique about her; some said it was her beauty, some said it was her manners; some insisted it was neither, but had a deeper origin; at any rate she was fresh. Something out of the common line and that piqued curiosity, was delightful; and in despite of her very moderate worldly advantages, compared with many others who were there, Eleanor Powle seemed likely to become in a little while the belle of Brighton. Certain rumours which were afloat no doubt facilitated and expedited this progress of things. Happily Eleanor did not hear them.

The rush of engagements and whirl of society at first was very wearying and painful to her. No heart had Eleanor to give to it. Only by putting a force upon herself, to please her father and mother, she managed to enter with some spirit into the amusements going forward, in which she was expected to take an active part. Perhaps this very fact had something to do with the noble and sweet disengagedness of manner which marked her unlike those about her, in a world where self-interest of some sort is the ruling motive. It was not Eleanor's world; it had nothing to do with the interests that were dear in her regard; and something of that carelessness which she brought to it conferred a grace that the world imitates in vain. Eleanor found however after a little, that the rush and hurry of her life and of all the people about her had a contagion in it; her own thoughts were beginning to be absorbed in what absorbed everybody; her own cherished interests were getting pushed into a corner. Eleanor resolved to make a stand then, and secure time enough to herself to let her own inner life have play and breathing room. But it was very difficult to make such a stand. Mrs. Powle ever stood like a watchman at the door to drive Eleanor out when she wanted to be in. Time! there seemed to be no time.

Eleanor had heard that Mr. Carlisle was expected at Brighton; so she was not greatly surprised one evening to find herself in the same room with him. It was at a public assembly. The glances that her curiosity cast, found him moving about among people very like, and in very exactly the manner of his old self. No difference that she could see. She wondered whether he would have the audacity to come and speak to her. Audacity was not a point in which Mr. Carlisle was failing. He came; and as he came others scattered away; melted off, and left her alone.

He came with the best air in the world; a little conscious, a little apologetic, wholly respectful, not altogether devoid of the old familiarity. He offered his hand; did not to be sure detain hers, which would have been inconvenient in a public assembly; but he detained*her*, falling into talk with an ease or an effrontery which it was impossible not to admire. And Eleanor admired him involuntarily. Certainly this man had capacities. He did not detain her too long; passed away as easily as he had come up; but returned again in the course of the evening to offer her some civility; and it was Mr. Carlisle who put her mother and herself into their carriage. Eleanor looked for a remark from her mother on the subject during their drive home; but Mrs. Powle made none.

The next evening he was at Mrs. Powle's rooms, where a small company was gathered every Tuesday. He might be excused if he watched, more than he wished to be seen watching, the sweet unconscious grace and ease with which Eleanor moved and spoke. Others noticed it, but Mr. Carlisle drew comparisons; and found to his mystification that her six months on a cheese-farm had returned Eleanor with an added charm of eye and manner, for which he could not account; which he could not immediately define. She was not expecting to see him this time, for she started a little when he presented himself. He came with the same pleasant expression that he had worn last night.

"Will you excuse me for remarking, that your winter has done you good?" he said.

"Yes. I know it has," Eleanor answered.

"With your old frankness, you acknowledge it?"

"Willingly."

Her accent was so simple and sweet, the attraction was irresistible. He sat down by her.

"I hope you are as willing as I am to acknowledge that all our last winter's work was not good. We exchanged letters."

"Hardly, Mr. Carlisle."

"Will you allow me to say, that I am ashamed of my part in that transaction. Eleanor, I want you to forget it, and to receive me as if it had not happened."

Eleanor was in a mixture of astonishment and doubt, as to how far his words might be taken. In the doubt, she hesitated one instant. Another person, a lady, drew near, and Mr. Carlisle yielded to her the place he had been occupying. The opportunity for an answer was gone. And though he was often near her during the evening, he did not recur again to the subject, and Eleanor could not. But the little bit of dialogue left her something to think of.

She had occasion often to think of it. Mr. Carlisle was everywhere, of course, in Brighton; at least he was in Eleanor's everywhere; she saw him a great deal and was a little struck and puzzled by his manner. He was very often in her immediate company; often attending upon her; it constantly happened, she could not tell how, that his arm was the one to which she was consigned, in walks and evening escorts. In a measure, he assumed his old place beside her; his attentions were constant, gracefully and freely paid; they just lacked the expression which would have obliged and enabled her to throw them off. It was rather the manner of a brother than of a lover; but it was familiar and confidential beyond what those assume that are not brothers. Whatever it meant, it dissatisfied Eleanor. The world, perhaps the gentleman himself, might justly think if she permitted this state of things that she allowed the conclusions naturally to be drawn from it. She determined to withdraw herself. It was curiously and inexplicably difficult. Too easily, too gracefully, too much as a matter of course, things fell into train, for Eleanor often to do anything to alter the train. But she was determined.

"Eleanor, do you know everybody is waiting?" Mrs. Powle exclaimed one morning bursting into Eleanor's room. "There's the whole riding party – and you are not ready!"

"No, mamma. I am not going."

"Not going! Just put on your riding-habit as quick as you can – Julia, get her hat! – you said you would go, and I have no notion of disappointing people like that. Get yourself ready immediately – do you hear me?"

"But, mamma – "

"Put on your habit! – then talk if you like. It's all nonsense. What are you doing? studying? Nonsense! there's time enough for studying when you are at home. Now be quick!"

"But, mamma – "

"Well? Put your hair lower, Eleanor; that will not do."

"Mamma, isn't Mr. Carlisle there?"

"Mr. Carlisle? What if he is? I hope he is. You are well in that hat,

Eleanor."

"Mamma, if Mr. Carlisle is there, – "

"Hold your tongue, Eleanor! – take your whip and go. They are all waiting. You may talk to me when you come back, but now you must go. I should think Mr. Carlisle would like to be of the party, for there isn't such another figure on the ride. Now kiss me and go. You are a good girl."

Mrs. Powle said it with some feeling. She had never found Eleanor so obediently tractable as since her return; she had never got from her such ready and willing cooperation, even in matters that her mother knew were not after Eleanor's heart, as now when her heart was less in them than ever. And at this moment she was gratified by the quiet grave obedience rendered her, in doing what she saw plainly enough Eleanor did not like to do. She followed her daughter down stairs with a proud heart.

It happened again, as it was always happening, that Mr. Carlisle was Eleanor's special attendant. Eleanor meditated possible ways of hindering this in future; but for the present there was no remedy. Mr. Carlisle put her on her horse; it was not till she was taking the reins in her left hand that something struck her with a sense of familiarity.

"What horse is this?" she asked.

"No other than your old friend and servant – I hope you have not forgotten her. She has not forgotten you."

Eleanor perceived that. As surely as it was Black Maggie, Maggie knew her; and displeased though Eleanor was with the master, she could not forbear a little caress of recognition to the beautiful creature he had once given her. Maggie was faultless; she and Eleanor were accustomed to each other; it was an undeniable pleasure to be so mounted again, as Eleanor could not but acknowledge to herself during the first few dainty dancing steps that Maggie made with her wonted burden. Nevertheless it was a great deal too much like old times that were destroyed; and glancing at Mr. Carlisle Eleanor saw that he was on Tippoo, and furthermore that there was a sparkle in his eye which meant hope, or triumph. Something put Eleanor on her mettle; she rode well that day. She rode with a careless grace and ease that even drew a compliment from Mr. Carlisle; but beyond that, his companion at first gave him little satisfaction. She was grave and cold to all his conversational efforts. However, there she was on his black mare; and Mr. Carlisle probably found an antidote to whatever discouragement she threw in his way. Chance threw something else in his way.

They had turned into one of the less frequented streets of the town, in their way to get out of it, when Eleanor's eye was seized by a figure on the sidewalk. It startled her inexpressibly; and before she could be sure her eyes did not deceive her the figure had almost passed, or they had almost passed the person. But in passing he had raised his bat; she knew then he had recognized her, as she had known him; and he had recognized her in such company. And he was in Brighton. Without a moment for thought or delay, Eleanor wheeled her horse's head sharply round and in one or two smart steps brought herself alongside of Mr. Rhys. He stopped, came up to her stirrup and shook hands. He looked grave, Eleanor thought. She hastened to speak.

"I could not pass you, Mr. Rhys. I had to leave Plassy without bidding you good bye."

"I am glad to meet you now," he said, – "before I go."

"Do you leave Brighton very soon?"

"To-morrow. I go up to London, and in a few days I expect to sail from there."

"For – ?"

"Yes, – for my post in the Southern Ocean. I have an unexpected opportunity."

Eleanor was silent. She could not find anything to say. She knew also that Mr. Carlisle had wheeled his horse after her, and that Tippoo was taking steps somewhere in her close neighbourhood. But she sat motionless, unable to move as well as to speak.

"I must not detain you," said Mr. Rhys. "Do you find it as easy to live well at Brighton as at Plassy?"

Eleanor answered a low and grave "no;" bending down over her saddlebow.

"Keep that which is committed to thy charge," he said gently.

"Farewell – and the Lord bless you!"

Eleanor had bared her gauntleted hand; he gave it the old earnest grasp, lifted his hat, and went on his way. Eleanor turned her horse's head again and found herself alongside of Mr. Carlisle. She rode on briskly, pointing out to him how far ahead were the rest of the party.

"Was not your friend somebody that I know?" he enquired as soon as there was a convenient pause.

"I am sure I do not know," said Eleanor. "I do not know how good your memory may be. He is the gentleman that was my brother's tutor at home – some time ago."

"I thought I remembered. Is he tutoring some one else now?"

"I should think not. He just tells me he is about to sail for the South

Seas. Mr. Carlisle, Maggie has a very nice mouth."

"Her mistress has a very nice hand," he answered, bending forward to Maggie's bridle so that he could look up in Eleanor's face. "Only you let her rein be too slack, as of old. You like her better than Tippoo?"

"Tippoo is beyond my management."

"I am not going to let you say that. You shall mount Tippoo next time, and become acquainted with your own powers. You are not afraid of anything?"

"Yes, I am."

"You did not use it."

"Well I have not grown cowardly," said Eleanor; "but I am afraid of mounting Tippoo; and what I am afraid of, Mr. Carlisle, I will not do."

"Just the reverse maxim from that which I should have expected from you. Do you say your friend there is going to the South Seas?"

"Mr. Rhys?" said Eleanor, turning her face full upon him.

"If that is his name – yes. Why does he not stick to tutoring?"

"Does anybody stick to tutoring that can help it?"

"I should think not; but then as a tutor he would be in the way of better things; he could mount to something higher."

"I believe he has some expectation of that sort in going to the

Pacific," said Eleanor. She spoke it with a most commonplace coolness.

"Seems a very roundabout road to promotion," said Mr. Carlisle, watching Eleanor's hand and stealthily her face; "but I suppose he knows best. Your friend is not a Churchman, is he?"

"No."

"I remember him as a popular orator of great powers. What is he leaving

England for?"

"You assume somewhat too much knowledge on my part of people's designs," said Eleanor carelessly. "I must suppose that he likes work on the other side of the world better than to work here; – for some reason or other."

"How the reason should be promotion, puzzles me," said her companion; "but that may be owing to prejudice on my part. I do not know how to conceive of promotion out of the regular line. In England and in the Church. To be sent to India to take a bishopric seems to me a descent in the scale. Have you this feeling?"

"About bishoprics?" said Eleanor smiling. "They are not in my line, you know."

"Don't be wicked! Have you this feeling about England?"

"If a bishopric in India were offered me? – "

"Well, yes! Would you accept it?"

"I really never had occasion to consider the subject before. It is such a very new thought, you see. But I will tell you, I should think the humblest curacy in England to be chosen rather, – unless for the sake of a wider sphere of doing good."

"Do you know," said Mr. Carlisle, looking very contented, and coming up closer, "your bridle hand has improved? It is very nearly faultless. What have you been riding this winter?"

"A wiry little pony."

"Honour, Eleanor!" said Mr. Carlisle laughing and bringing his hand again near enough to throw over a lock of Maggie's mane which had fallen on the wrong side. "I am really curious."

"Well I tell you the truth. But Mr. Carlisle, I wonder you people in parliament do not stir yourselves up to right some wrongs. People ought to live, if they are curates; and there was one where I was last winter – an excellent one – living, or starving, I don't know which you would call it, on thirty pounds a year."

Mr. Carlisle entered into the subject; and questions moral, legislative, and ecclesiastical, were discussed by him and Eleanor with great earnestness and diligence; by him at least with singular delight. Eleanor kept up the conversation with unflagging interest; it was broken by a proposal on Mr. Carlisle's part for a gallop, to which she willingly agreed; held her part in the ensuing scamper with perfect grace and steadiness, and as soon as it was over, plunged Mr. Carlisle deep again into reform.

"Nobody has had such honour, as I to-day," he assured her as he took her down from her horse. "I shall see you to-night, of course?"

"Of course. I suppose," said Eleanor.

It cannot be said that Eleanor made any effort to change the "of course," though the rest of the day as usual was swallowed up in a round of engagements. There was no breathing time, and the evening occasion was a public one. Mrs. Powle was in a great state of satisfaction with her daughter to-day; Eleanor had shunned no company nor exertion, had carried an unusual spirit into all; and a minute with Mr. Carlisle after the ride had shewed him in a sort of exultant mood. She looked over Eleanor's dress critically when they were about leaving home for the evening's entertainment. It was very simple indeed; yet Mrs. Powle in the depth of her heart could not find that anything was wanting to the effect.

Nor could a yet more captious critic, Mr. Carlisle; who was on the ground before them and watched and observed a little while from a distance. Admiration and passion were roused within him, as he watched anew what he had already seen in Eleanor's manner since she came to Brighton; that grace of absolute ease and unconsciousness, which only the very highest breeding can successfully imitate. No Lady Rythdale, he was obliged to confess, that ever lived, had better advanced the honours of her house, than would this one; could she be persuaded to accept the position. This manner did not use to be Eleanor's; how had she got it on the borders of Wales? Neither was the sweetness of that smile to be seen on her lip in the times gone by; and a little gravity was wanting then, which gave a charm of dignity to the exquisite poise which whether of character or manner was so at home with her now. Was she too grave? The question rose; but he answered it with a negative. Her smile came readily, and it was the sweeter for not being always seen. His meditations were interrupted by a whisper at his elbow.

"She will not dance!"

"Who will not?" said he, finding himself face to face with Mrs. Powle.

"Eleanor. She will not. I am afraid it is one of her new notions."

Mr. Carlisle smiled a peculiar smile. "Hardly a fault, I think, Mrs.

Powle. I am not inclined to quarrel with it."

"You do not see any faults at all, I believe," said the lady. "Now I am more discerning."

Mr. Carlisle did not speak his thoughts, which were complimentary only in one direction, to say truth. He went off to Eleanor, and prevented any more propositions of dancing for the rest of the evening. He could not monopolize her, though. He was obliged to see her attention divided in part among other people, and to take a share which though perfectly free and sufficiently gracious, gave him no advantage in that respect over several others. The only advantage he could make sure of was that of attending Eleanor home. The evening left him an excited man, not happy in his mind.

Eleanor, having quitted her escort, went slowly up the stairs; bade her mother good night; went into her own room and locked the door. Then methodically she took off the several parts of her evening attire and laid them away; put on a dressing-gown, threw her window open, and knelt down by it.

The stars kept watch over the night. A pleasant fresh breeze blew in from the sea. They were Eleanor's only companions, and they never missed her from the window the whole night long. I am bound to say, that the morning found her there.

But nights so spent make a heavy draft on the following day. In spite of all that cold water could do in the way of refreshment, in spite of all that the morning cup of tea could do, Eleanor was obliged to confess to a headache.

"Why Eleanor, child, you look dreadfully!" said Mrs. Powle, who came into her room and found her lying down. "You are as white! – and black rings under your eyes. You will never be able to go with the riding party this morning."

"I am afraid not, mamma. I am sorry. I would go if I could; but I believe I must lie still. Then I shall be fit for this evening, perhaps."

She was not; but that one day of solitude and silence was all that Eleanor took for herself. The next day she joined the riders again; and from that time held herself back from no engagement to which her mother or Mr. Carlisle urged her.

Mr. Carlisle felt it with a little of his old feeling of pride. It was the only thing in which Eleanor could be said to give the feeling much chance; for while she did not reject his attendance, which she could not easily do, nor do at all without first vanquishing her mother; and while she allowed a certain remains of the old wonted familiarity, she at the same never gave Mr. Carlisle any reason to think that he had regained the least power over her. She received him well, but as she received a hundred others. He was her continual attendant, but he never felt that it was by Eleanor's choice; and he knew sometimes that it was by her choice that he was thrown out of his office. She bewildered him with her sweet dignity, which was more utterly unmanageable than any form of pride or passion. The pride and passion were left to be Mr. Carlisle's own. Pride was roused, that he was stopped by so gentle a barrier in his advances; and passion was stimulated, by uncertainty not merely, but by the calm grace and indefinable sweetness which he did not remember in Eleanor, well as he had loved her before. He loved her better now. That charm of manner was the very thing to captivate Mr. Carlisle; he valued it highly; and did not appreciate it the less because it baffled him.

"He's ten times worse than ever," Mrs. Powle said exultingly to her husband. "I believe he'd go through fire and water to make sure of her."

"And how's she?" growled the Squire.

"She's playing with him, girl-fashion," said Mrs. Powle chuckling. "She is using her power."

"What is she using it for?" said the Squire threateningly.

"O to enjoy herself, and make him value her properly. She will come round by and by."

How was Eleanor? The world had opportunities of judging most of the time, as far as the outside went; yet there were still a few times of the day which the world did not intrude upon; and of those there was an hour before breakfast, when Eleanor was pretty secure against interruption even from her mother. Mrs. Powle was a late riser. Julia, who was very much cast away at Brighton and went wandering about like a rudderless vessel, found out that Eleanor was dressed and using the sunshine long before anybody else in the house knew the day was begun. It was a golden discovery. Eleanor was alone, and Julia could have her to herself a little while at least. Even if Eleanor was bent on reading or writing, still it was a joy to be near her, to watch her, to smooth her soft hair, and now and then break her off from other occupations to have a talk.

"Eleanor," said Julia one day, a little while after these oases in time had been discovered by her, "what has become of Mr. Rhys? do you know?"

"He has gone," said Eleanor. She was sitting by her open window, a book open on her lap. She looked out of the window as she spoke.

"Gone? Do you mean he has gone away from England? You don't mean that?"

"Yes."

"To that dreadful place?"

"What dreadful place?"

"Where he was going, you know, – somewhere. Are you sure he has gone,

Eleanor?"

"Yes. I saw it in the paper – the mention of his going – He and two others."

"And has he gone to that horrible place?"

"Yes, I suppose so. That is where he wished to go."

"I don't see how he could!" said Julia. "How could he! where the people are so bad! – and leave England?"

"Why Julia, have you forgotten? Don't you know whose servant Mr. Rhys is?"

"Yes," said Julia mutteringly, – "but I should think he would be afraid.

Why the people there are as wicked as they can be."

"That is no reason why he should be afraid. What harm could they do to him?"

"Why! – they could kill him, easily," said Julia.

"And would that be great harm to Mr. Rhys?" said Eleanor looking round at her. "What if they did, and he were called quick home to the court of his King, – do you think his reception there would be a sorrowful thing?"

"Why Nell," said Julia, "do you mean heaven?"

"Do you not think that is Mr. Rhys's home?"

"I haven't thought much about it at all," said Julia laying her head down on Eleanor's shoulder. "You see, nobody talked to me ever since he went away; and mamma talks everything else."

"Come here in the mornings, and we'll talk about it," said Eleanor. Her voice was a little husky.

"Shall we?" said Julia rousing up again. "But Eleanor, what are your eyes full for? Did you love Mr. Rhys too?"

It was an innocent question; but instead of answering, Eleanor turned again to the window. She sat with her hand pressed upon her mouth, while the full eyes brimmed and ran over, and filled again; and drop after drop plashed upon the window-sill. It was impossible to help it, for that minute; and Julia looked on wonderingly.

"O Nell," she repeated almost awe-struck, "what is it? What has made you sorry too? – " But she had to wait a little while for her answer.

"He was a good friend to me," said Eleanor at last, wiping her eyes; "and I suppose it is not very absurd to cry for a friend that is gone, that one will never see again."

"Maybe he will come back some time," said Julia sorrowfully.

"Not while there is work there for him to do," said Eleanor. She waited a little while. There was some difficulty in going on. When she did speak her tone was clear and firm.

"Julia, shall we follow the Lord as Mr. Rhys does?"

"How?"

"By doing whatever Jesus gives us to do."

"What has he given us to do?" said Julia.

"If you come to my room in the mornings, we will read and find out. And we will pray, and ask to be taught."

Julia's countenance lightened and clouded with alternate changes.

"Will you, Eleanor! But what have we got to do?"

"Love Jesus."

"Well I – O I did use to, Eleanor! and I think I do now; only I have forgotten to think about anything, this ever so long."

"Then if we love him, we shall find plenty of things to do for him."

"What, Eleanor? I would like to do something."

"Just whatever he gives us, Julia. Come, darling, – have you not duties?"

"Duties?"

"Have you not things that it is your duty to do? – or not to do?"

"Studies!" said Julia. "But I don't like them."

"For Jesus' sake?"

Julia burst into tears. Eleanor's tone was so loving and gentle, it reached the memories that had been slumbering.

"How can I do them for him, Eleanor?" she asked, half perversely still.

"'Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' So he has told us."

"But my studies, Eleanor? how can I?"

"Who gave you the opportunity, Julia?"

"Well – I know."

"Well, if God has given you the opportunity, do you think he means it for nothing? He has work for you to do, Julia, some time, for which you will want all these things that you have a chance of learning now; if you miss the chance, you will certainly not be ready for the work."

"Why, Eleanor! – that's funny."

"What is it?"

"Why I never thought of such a thing."

"What did you think?"

"I thought I had French and German to study, for instance, because everybody else learned French and German. I did not think there was any use in it."

"You forgot who had given you them to learn."

"No, mamma would have it. Just her notion. Papa didn't care."

"But dear Julia, you forget who has made it your duty to please mamma's notions. And you forget who it is that has given you your place in the world. You might have been born in poverty, with quite other lessons to learn, and quite other work in the world."

"You talk just as queer as if you were Mr. Rhys himself," said Julia. "I never heard of such things. Do you suppose all the girls who are learning French and German at school – all the girls in England – have the same sort of work to do? that they will want it for?"

"No, not all the same. But God never gives the preparation without the occasion."

"Then suppose they do not make the preparation?"

"Then when the occasion comes, they will not be ready for it. When their work is given them to do, they will be found wanting."

"It's so queer!" said Julia.

"What?"

"To think such things about lessons."

"You may think such things about everything. Whatever God gives you, he gives you to use in some way for him."

"But how can I possibly know *how*, Eleanor?"

"Come to me in the mornings, and you and I will try to find out."

"Did you say, I must please all mamma's notions?"

"Certainly – all you can."

"But I like papa's notions a great deal better than mamma's."

"You must try to meet both," said Eleanor smiling.

"I do not like a great many of mamma's notions. I don't think there is any sense in them."

"But God likes obedience, Julia. He has bid you honour mamma and papa.

Do it for him."

"Do you mean to please all mamma's notions?" said Julia sharply.

"All that I can, certainly."

"Well it is one of her notions that Mr. Carlisle should get you to the Priory after all. Are you going to let her? Are you going to let him, I mean?"

"No."

"Then if it is your duty to please mamma's notions, why mustn't you please this one?"

"Because here I have my duty to others to think of."

"To whom?" said Julia as quick as lightning.

"To myself – and to Mr. Carlisle."

"Mr. Carlisle!" said Julia. "I'll be bound he thinks your duty to him would make you do whatever he likes."

"It happens that I take a different view of the subject."

"But Eleanor, what work do you suppose I have to do in the world, that

I shall want French and German for? real work, I mean?"

"I can't tell. But I know *now* you have a beautiful example to set?"

"Of what? learning my lessons well?"

"Of whatever is lovely and of good report. Of whatever will please

Jesus."

Julia put her arms round her sister's neck and hid her face there.

"I am going to give you a word to remember to-day; keep it with you, dear. 'Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' Just think of that, whether you are busy or not busy. And we will ask the Lord to make us so full of his love, that we cannot help it."

They knelt and prayed together; after which Julia gave her sister a great many earnest caresses; and they went down to breakfast a much comforted pair.

CHAPTER V
IN LONDON

"London makes mirth! but I know God hears
The sobs i' the dark, and the dropping of tears."

The morning meetings were kept up. Julia had always been very fond of her sister; now she almost worshipped her. She would get as close as possible, put her arm round Eleanor's waist, and sometimes lay her head on her shoulder; and so listen to the reading and join in the talking. The talks were always finished with prayer; and at first it not seldom happened that Eleanor's prayer became choked with tears. It happened so often that Julia remarked upon it; and after that it never happened again.

"Eleanor, can you see much use in my learning to dance?" was a question which Julia propounded one morning.

"Not much."

"Mamma says I shall go to dancing school next winter."

"Next winter! What, at Brompton?"

"O we are going to London after we go from here. So mamma says. Why didn't you know it?"

Eleanor remained silent.

"Now what good is that going to do?" Julia went on. "What work is that to fit me for, Eleanor? – dancing parties?"

"I hope it will not fit you for those," the elder sister replied gravely.

"Why not? don't you go to them?"

"I am obliged to go sometimes – I never take part."

"Why not Eleanor? Why don't you? you can dance."

"Read," said Eleanor, pointing to the words. Julia read.

"'Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; giving thanks to God and the Father by him.' – Well Eleanor?"

"I cannot find anything I can do in the Lord's service at such places, except to stand by and say by my manner that I do not enjoy them nor approve of them."

"That won't hinder other people enjoying them, though."

"I do not think people enjoy them much. You and I have a hundred times as much fun in one good scamper over the moor. Dear old moor! I wish we were back again. But other people's doing is not my business."

"Then what makes you go, Eleanor?"

"Mamma would be so exceedingly vexed if I did not. I mean to get out of it soon – as soon as I can."

"Do you think you will, in London?"

Eleanor was silent, and thoughtful.

"Well, I know one thing," said Julia, – "I am not going to dancing school. Mamma says it will make me graceful; and I think I am as graceful as other people now – as most other people. I don't think I am as graceful as you are. Don't you think so, Eleanor?"

Eleanor smiled, soberly enough.

"Eleanor, must I go to dancing school?"

"Why do you wish not to go?"

"Because you think it is wrong."

"Darling, you cannot displease mamma for such a reason. You must always honour every wish of hers, except you thought that honouring her would be to dishonour or displease the Lord."

The words were spoken and listened to with intense feeling and earnestness on both sides; and the tears came back in Eleanor's prayer that morning.

With the world at large, things maintained a very unaltered position during the rest of the stay at Brighton. Mr. Carlisle kept his position, advancing a little where it seemed possible. Eleanor kept hers; neither advancing nor retreating. She was very good to Mr. Carlisle; she did not throw him off; she gave him no occasion to complain of an unready talker or an unwilling companion. A little particular kindness indeed she had for him, left from the old times. Julia would have been much mystified by the brightness and life and spirit Eleanor shewed in company, and in his company especially; which her little sister did not see in their private intercourse alone. Nevertheless, Mr. Carlisle's passion was rather stimulated by difficulty than fed by hope; though hope lived high sometimes. All that Eleanor gave him she gave shim readily, and as readily gave to others; she gave coolly too, as coolly as she gave to others. Mr. Carlisle took in many things the place of an accepted suitor; but never in Eleanor's manner, he knew. It chafed him, it piqued him; it made him far more than ever bent on obtaining her hand; her heart he could manage then. Just now it was beyond his management; and when Mrs. Powle smiled congratulation, Mr. Carlisle bit his lip. However, he had strong aids; he did not despair. He hoped something from London.

So they all went to London. Eleanor could gain no satisfactory explanation why. Only her mother asserted that her father's health must have the advice of London physicians. The Squire himself was not much more explicit. That his health was not good, however, was true; the Squire was very unlike his hearty, boisterous, independent self. He moped, and he suffered too. Eleanor could not help thinking he would have suffered less, as he certainly would have moped less, at home; and an unintelligible grunt and grumble now and then seemed to confirm her view of the case; but there they were, fixed in London, and Eleanor was called upon to enter into all sorts of London gaieties, of which always Mr. Carlisle made part and parcel.

Eleanor made a stand, and declined to go to places where she could not enjoy nor sympathize with what was done. She could not think it duty to go to the opera, or the theatre, or to great routs, even to please her mother. Mrs. Powle made a stand too, and insisted, and was very angry; but Eleanor stood firm; and the end was, she gained her point. Mr. Carlisle was disappointed, but counselled acquiescence; and Mrs. Powle with no very good grace acquiesced; for though a woman, she did not like to be foiled. Eleanor gained one point only; she was not obliged to go where she could not go with a good conscience. She did not thereby get her time to herself. London has many ways of spending time; nice ways too; and in one and another of these Eleanor found hers all gone. Day by day it was so. Nothing was left but those hours before breakfast. And what was worse, Mr. Carlisle was at her elbow in every place; and Eleanor became conscious that she was in spite of herself appearing before the world as his particular property, and that the conclusion was endorsed by her mother. She walked as straight as she could; but the days grew to be heavy days.

She devoted herself to her father as much as possible; and in that found a refuge. The Squire was discontented and unwell; a good deal depressed in spirits as a consequence; he delighted to have Eleanor come and sit with him and read to him after dinner. She escaped many an engagement by that means. In vain Mrs. Powle came in with her appeal, about Eleanor's good requiring him to do without her; the Squire listened, struggled, and selfishness got the better.

"St. George and the Dragon!" he exclaimed, – "she shall do as she likes, and as I like, for one hour in the twenty-four. You may haul her about the rest of the time – but from dinner for a while or so you may spare her. I choose she shall be with me."

The "while" was often three hours. Eleanor enjoyed repose then, and enjoyed ministering to her father; who speedily became exceedingly wedded to her services, and learned to delight in her presence after a new manner. He would have her read to him; she might read everything she pleased

except what had a religious bearing. That he disposed of at once, and bade her seek another book. He loved to have her brush his hair, when his head ached, by the half hour together; at other times he engaged her in a game of chess and a talk about Plassy. The poor Squire was getting a good deal tamed down, to take satisfaction in such quiet pleasures; but the truth was that he found himself unable for what he liked better. Strength and health were both failing; he was often suffering; drives in the park wearied him almost as much as sitting alone in his room; he swore at them for the stupidest entertainment man ever pleased himself with. What he did with the lonely hours he spent entirely by himself, nobody knew; Eleanor knew that he was rejoiced every time to see her come in. His eye brightened when she opened the door, and he settled himself in his easy chair to have a good time; and then even the long columns of the newspaper, read from one end to the other, up and down, were pleasant to Eleanor too. It was soothing repose, in contrast with the whirl of all the rest of her life. Until the time came when Mr. Carlisle began to join the party. How he did it Eleanor hardly knew; but he did it. He actually contrived to make one at those evening entertainments, which admitted but two others; and with his usual adroitness and skill he made his presence so acceptable that Eleanor felt it would be quite in vain to attempt to hinder him. And so her rest was gone, and her opportunity; for she had cherished fond hopes of winning not only her own way into her father's heart, but with that, in time, a hearing for truths the Squire had always pushed out of his path.

Mr. Carlisle was very pleasant; there was no question. He did not at all usurp her office, nor interfere with it. But when he saw her getting weary of a parliamentary discussion, or a long discourse on politics or parties, his hand would gently draw away the paper from hers and his voice carry on the reading. And his voice was agreeable to her father; Eleanor saw it; the Squire would turn his head a little towards the new reader, and an expression of anything but dissatisfaction steal over his features. Eleanor sat by, half mortified, half feeling real good-will towards Mr. Carlisle for his grace and kindness. Or if a game of chess were on foot, Mr. Carlisle would sit by, he generally declined playing himself, and make the play very lively with his talk; teaching Eleanor, whose part he invariably took, and keeping a very general's watch over her as if she had been a subordinate officer. Mr. Powle liked that too; it made his fighting better fun; he chuckled a good deal over Mr. Carlisle's play by proxy. Eleanor could not help it, nor withdraw herself. She knew what brought Mr. Carlisle there, and she could not avoid him, nor the very easy familiar terms on which they all sat round the chess table. She was admirably quiet and cool; but then it is true she felt no unkindness towards Mr. Carlisle, and sometimes she feared she shewed kindness too frankly. It was very difficult to help that too. Nevertheless it was plain the gentleman did not dare trust anything to his present power over her, for he never tried it. He evidently relied on somewhat else in his advances. And Eleanor felt that the odds were rather hard against her. Father and mother, and such a suitor!

She was cut off from her evening refreshment; and the next step was, that her morning pleasure with Julia was also denied her. Mrs. Powle had been in a state of gratulation with reference to Julia's improvement; Julia had become latterly so docile, so decorous, and so diligent. One unlucky day it came to Mrs. Powle's knowledge that Julia objected to going to dancing school; objected to spending money on the accomplishment, and time on the acquisition; and furthermore, when pressed, avowed that she did not believe in the use of it when attained. It seemed to Mrs. Powle little less than a judgment upon her, to have the second of her daughters holding such language; it was traced to Eleanor's influence of course; and further and diligent questioning brought out the fact of the sisters' daily studies in company. They should happen no more, Mrs. Powle immediately decided. Julia was forbidden to go to her sister's room for such purposes; and to make matters sure she was provided with other and abundant occupation to keep her engaged at the dangerous hour. With Eleanor herself Mrs. Powle held no communication on the subject; having for certain reasons an unwillingness to come into unnecessary collision with her; but Eleanor found her little sister's society was no more to be had. Mrs. Powle would assuredly have sent Julia quite out of the house to get her away from mischievous

influences, but that she could not prevail on her husband. No daughter of his, he declared, should be made a fool of in a boarding-school, while he had a foot above ground to prevent it.

"Why Mrs. Powle," he said, "don't you know yourself that Eleanor is the only sensible girl in London? That's growing up at home, just as you didn't want."

"If she only had not some notions – " said Mrs. Powle dubiously. For between her husband and Mr. Carlisle she was very much *held in* on Eleanor's subject; both insisting that she should let her alone. It was difficult for Eleanor to be displeased with Mr. Carlisle in these times; his whole behaviour was so kind and gentlemanly. The only fault to be found with him was his pursuit of her. That was steady and incessant; yet at the same time so brotherly and well-bred in manner that Eleanor sometimes feared she gave him unconsciously too much encouragement. Feeling really grateful to him, it was a little hard not to shew it. For although Mr. Carlisle was the cause of her trouble, he was also a shield between her and its more active manifestations. He favoured her not dancing; *that* was like a jealous man, Mrs. Powle said. He smiled at Eleanor's charities, and would have helped them if he could. He would not have her scolded on the score of religious duties; he preferred administering the antidote to them as quietly as possible.

"Eleanor!" said Mrs. Powle, putting her head out of the drawing-room door one Sunday evening as she heard somebody come in – "Eleanor! is that you? come here. Where have you been? Here is Mr. Carlisle waiting this hour to go with you to hear the Bishop of London preach."

Eleanor came into the room. She was dressed with extreme plainness, and looking so calm and sweet that it was no wonder Mr. Carlisle's eyes rested on her as on a new object of admiration. Few of his acquaintance looked so; and Eleanor did not use it, in times past.

"Now here you are, child, almost too late. Make haste and get yourself ready. Where have you been?"

"She cannot be more ready than she is," remarked the other member of the party.

"I think, mamma, I will not go to-night. I am a little tired."

"That's nonsense, Eleanor! When were you ever too unwell to go to church, this winter? Go and get ready. What Mr. Carlisle says is all very well, but he does not see you with my eyes."

"I shall not take her if she is tired," said Mr. Carlisle gently. And

Eleanor sat still.

"Where have you been then, child, to tire yourself? You do try me,

Eleanor. What can you have found to do?"

"All London, mamma," said Eleanor pleasantly.

"All London! I should like to know what that means. All wrong, I suppose, according to you. Well, what part of London have you been attacking to-day? I should think the best thing for London would be to hear its Bishop. What have you been about, Eleanor?"

"Only to school, mamma – Sunday school."

"But you went there this morning?"

"That was another."

Mrs. Powle looked appealingly to Mr. Carlisle, as saying, How long would you let this go on? Turned her dissatisfied face again to Eleanor,

"What school is this, mistress? and where?"

"Mamma, if I tell you where it is, I am afraid you will be frightened.

It is a Ragged school."

"A Ragged school! What does that mean, Eleanor? What is a Ragged school?"

"A school to teach ragged children, mamma. Or rather, for ragged people – they are not most of them children; and perhaps I should not say they are ragged; for though some of them are, others of them are not. They are some of the wretchedest of the ragged class, at any rate."

"And Eleanor Powle can find nothing more suitable to do, than to go and teach such a set! Why you ought to have a policeman there to take care of you."

"We have several."

"Policemen!"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And it is not safe without them!"

"It is safe with them, mamma."

"Mr. Carlisle, what do you think of such doings?" said Mrs. Powle, appealing in despair.

"They move my curiosity," he said quietly. "I hope Eleanor will go on to gratify it."

"And can you really find nothing better than that to do, of a Sunday?" her mother went on.

"No, mamma, I do not think I can."

"What do they learn?" Mr. Carlisle inquired.

"A little reading, some of them; but the main thing to teach them is the truths of the Bible. They never heard them before, anywhere, – nor can hear them anywhere else."

"Do you think they will hear them there?"

"I am sure they do."

"And remember?"

The tears filled Eleanor's eyes, as she answered, "I am sure some of them will."

"And suppose you lose your life in this Ragged teaching?" said Mrs. Powle. "You might catch your death of some horrid disease, Eleanor. Do you think that right?"

"Mamma, there was One who did lay down his life for you and for me. I am not going to offer mine needlessly. But I do not think it is in any danger here. Many go besides me."

"She is a confirmed Methodist!" said Mrs. Powle, turning to Mr.

Carlisle. He smiled.

"Where does your school meet, Eleanor?"

"I am afraid of terrifying mamma, if I tell you."

"We will take care of her in case she faints. I am in no danger."

"It is the Field-Lane school, Mr. Carlisle."

"The Field-Lane? Won't you enlighten me?"

"Carter's Field-Lane; but it is only called Field-Lane. Did you never hear of it? It was in a wretched place in Saffron Hill at first – now it is removed to an excellent room in a better street."

"Where?"

"You know where Clerkenwell is?"

This name gave no intelligence whatever to Mrs. Powle, but Mr. Carlisle looked enlightened. His face changed and grew dark with something very like horror and alarm.

"Do you know that is one of the worst parts of London?" he said.

"Pretty bad," said Eleanor, "and the school used to be. It is wonderfully improved now."

"There, you see, Eleanor, Mr. Carlisle thinks it is a very improper place for you to be; and I hope you will go there no more. I do not mean you shall."

Eleanor was silent, looking a little anxious, though not cast down. Mr.

Carlisle marked her.

"It is not safe for you, Eleanor," he said.

"It is perfectly safe," she answered with a smile that had a curious brightness in it. "I run no risk whatever."

"You are a bold creature," said her mother, "and always were; but that is no reason why you should be allowed to go your own crazy ways. I will have no more of this, Eleanor."

"Mamma, I am perfectly safe. I have nothing at all to fear. I would not fail of going for anything in the world." She spoke with an earnest and shadowed face now. She felt it.

"Who goes with you? or do you go alone?"

"No, ma'am – Thomas is with me always."

"How came you to get into such a strange place?"

"I heard of it – and there is sure to be more to do in such a work than there are hands for. I know one or two of the gentlemen that teach there also."

"Methodists, I suppose?" said Mrs. Powle sneeringly.

"One of them is, mamma; the other is a Churchman."

"And do you *teach* there?"

"Yes, ma'am – a large class of boys." Eleanor's smile came again – and went.

"I'll have no more of it, Eleanor. I will not. It is just absurdity and fanaticism, the whole thing. Why shouldn't those boys go to the regular schools, instead of your giving your time and risking your life to teach them Sundays? *You* indeed!"

"You do not know what sort of boys they are, mamma; or you would not ask that."

"I suppose they have learned some things too well already?" said Mr.

Carlisle.

"Well, I'll have no more of it!" said Mrs. Powle. "I am disgusted with the whole thing. If they are not good boys, the House of Correction is the best place for them. Mr. Carlisle, do you not say so?"

Mr. Carlisle's knowledge of the limits of Houses of Correction and the number of boys in London who were not good boys, forbade him to give an affirmative answer; his character as a reformer also came up before him. More than all, Eleanor's face, which was somewhat sad.

"Mrs. Powle, I am going to petition you to suspend judgment, and reconsider the case of the Ragged schools. I confess to a selfish motive in my request – I have a desire to go there myself and see this lady with her scholars around her. The picturesque effect, I should say, must be striking."

Mrs. Powle looked at him as a very unwise and obstinate man, who was bewitched into false action.

"If you have a fancy for such effects," she said; "I suppose you must do as you please. To me the effect is striking and not picturesque. Just look at her!"

Mr. Carlisle did so, and the expression on his face was so unsatisfactory that Mrs. Powle gave up the matter; laughed, and went out of the room.

"I will be less striking," said Eleanor, "if you will excuse me." And she left the room to change her dress. But when she came back an hour after, Mr. Carlisle was still there.

"Eleanor," said he, coming and standing before her, "may I go with you the next time you go to Field Lane?"

"No, I think not. You would not know what to do in such a place, Mr.

Carlisle."

"Do you think so?"

"They are a set of people whom you do not like; people who you think ought to be fined – and imprisoned – and transported; and all that sort of thing."

"And what do you think ought to be done with them?"

"I would try a different regimen."

"Pray what would it be?"

"I would tell them of the love of One who died for them. And I would shew them that the servants of that One love them too."

She spoke quietly, but there was a light in her eye.

"How, for heaven's sake, Eleanor?"

"Mr. Carlisle, I would never condemn a man or boy very severely for stealing, when I had left him no other way to live."

"So you would make the rest of the world responsible?"

"Are they not? These fellows never heard a word of right or of truth – never had a word of kindness – never were brought under a good influence, – until they found it in the Ragged school. What could you expect? May I illustrate?"

"Pray do."

"There is a boy in a class neighbouring to mine in the room, whose teacher I know. The boy is thirteen or fourteen years old now; he came to the school first some four or five years ago, when he was a little bit of a fellow. Then he had already one brother transported for stealing, and another in prison for stealing – both only a little older than he. They had often no other way of getting food but stealing it. The father and mother were both of them drunkards and swallowed up everything in liquor. This little fellow used to come to the morning school, which was held every day, without any breakfast; many a time. Barefooted, over the cold streets, and no breakfast to warm him. But after what he heard at the school he promised he would never do as his brothers had done; and he had some very hard times in keeping his promise. At last he came to his teacher and asked him for a loan of threepence; if he had a loan of threepence he thought he could make a living."

Mr. Carlisle half turned on his heel, but instantly resumed his look and attitude of fixed attention.

"Mr. Morrison lent him threepence. And Jemmy has supported himself respectably ever since, and is now in honest employment as an errand boy."

"I hope you can tell me how he managed it? I do not understand doing business on such a capital."

"The threepence bought twelve boxes of matches. Those were sold for a halfpenny each – doubling his capital at once. So he carried on that business for two years. All day he went to school. In the end of the day he went out with twelve boxes of matches and hawked them about until they were disposed of. That gave him threepence for the next day's trade, and threepence to live upon. He spent one penny for breakfast, he said; another for dinner, and another for supper. So he did for two years; now he does better."

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