

PASSAGES  
IN THE LIFE OF  
MRS. MARGARET MAITLAND,  
OF SUNNYSIDE.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

“ Give me my scallop shell of quiet,  
My staff of peace to rest upon—  
My scrip of joy—immortal diet,  
My bottle of salvation—  
My gown of glory, hope’s true gage;  
And thus I take my pilgrimage—  
While my soul, like a quiet Palmer,  
Travelleth toward the land of Heaven—”

SIR WALTER RASSELL



IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# PASSAGES

IN THE LIFE OF

MRS. MARGARET MAITLAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

It has often come into my head that, seeing the threads of Providence have many times a semblance of ravelling, it would be for edification to trace out one here and one there, that folk might see how well woven the web was, into which the Almighty's hand had run them. I doubt not the world will think me bold, being but a quiet woman of discreet years and small riches, in having such an imagination as that it could be the

better of hearing the like of my homely story ; nevertheless, seeing there are many young folk who are but beginning for their own hand, and know not what may befall them, I think it is right to set down here what has come to pass in my corner of this great earth, and within my own knowledge.

It is a troublous water—the water of life, and it has often given me a sore heart to see young things launched upon it, like bairn's boats, sailing hither and thither in an unpurpose-like manner, and having no thought of who it is that sends both the lown wind and the storm ; and if they have need of various instruments and a right pilot-man to guide ships over that constant uncertainty, the sea (as I have read in books), I think not but there is far greater need of all manner of helps to win safely through that greater uncertainty—life. Uncertainty I call it, looking at it as the young folk I

have mentioned do, with the short-sighted vision of a frail mortal; and though we know that to One Eye there is in it no matter of dubiety, yet I will not therefore change my word, for that is too great a thing for the like of me, seeing I profess to nothing but a common share of understanding, to make or meddle with.

I mind well when I was in years little above a bairn, of lying on the grass in a park near the Manse (for my father had a glebe of fine land, the like of which, I have heard, was hardly in the parish), looking at the white clouds sailing upon the sky, and thinking no mortal could be happier if I might but have abode there; but it aye so happened that my seam was lying waiting for me in the Manse parlour, or the unlearned lesson compelled me to go in; and when in the summer nights I had a while to myself, there ever came in something to

hinder me of my pleasure, for, either the sky was overcast, or the grass was damp, or my brother Claud drew me into more stirring plays, it being little in the nature of a blythe boy to bide quiet, and look at the sky—that I should speak of him so ! that is a man with grey hairs upon his head, and a father in the Kirk ; but the years steal by us fast, and folk forget.

My father was Minister of the parish of Pasturelands ; a pleasant country place, where there was neither stir nor bustle, but a quiet kirk to preach in, and a godly congregation to minister to. My father was a man of bye-ordinary mildness, and just in an uncommon manner fitted for his charge. His session also were douce, grave, elderly men, who had a perception when to draw the rein tight and when to let it slacken, and of the folk themselves I have often heard the minister, my father, say, that

among them there were fewer of the dross, and more of the salt of the earth, than is to be found often in this weary and wicked generation. They were mostly farmers and farm servants, with a sprinkling of country tradesmen, and here and there a Laird and a Laird's family, with lady daughters brought up in Edinburgh, and bringing their fine garments to put foolish notions of pride and gentility into many a young head, no excepting my own; for I was just like my neighbours, and thought much of the shining vanity of apparel, the purple and fine linen of the world.

I thought not I could have gotten on so far without speaking of my mother. Truly she was of a most uncommon spirit, being more like a lanthorn holding a great light than any other thing; for she was gifted with a mind that drew others to it, as the loadstone that bairns play with draws the

needle ; but woes me ! the mortal habitation thereof was weak, and easy wearied. I never mind of her being strong ; but I mind well at the different occasions when my father had brethren from various parts helping him, how they would slip out of the study into the parlour, and get a chair near the sofa on which my mother commonly abode, seeing she was not able to go about much even in the house. We had few visitors except the ministers ; but whosoever came, they aye drew to my mother, and the fame of her was over all the country-side, though she was ever a most quiet woman, abiding for a constancy within her own house.

My brother Claud and me were the only ones left out of a flock, and while the folk said that I bore her outward resemblance, it was an undoubted thing that Claud had the features of her mind. There was a mildness in my father's voice that might have moved



the most hardened, when he spoke to them in the words of the tender-hearted Apostle John, of Him that was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us. But when Claud lifted his head in the pulpit, and preached his first sermon on the grand text, "Who is He that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" there was a glance from below his brow that shot into your heart. I had near said it was a proud day for us, that day that Claud preached his first sermon, and truly it is not to be denied that carnal pride is ill to mortify, but without doubt it was a day of gratitude and thanksgiving.

Many had been the prayers, and much the anxiety in the Manse, when he went forth from amongst us, a simple boy, to stand by himself, and meet the temptations of that great and wicked city Edinburgh, the very distant sound of which is enough

to put folk in mind of the roar of him that goeth about like a lion, seeking whom he may devour. I mind how my mother and me used to look at him when he came home in the spring, for fear there should be any change; and I will never forget how my godly father wrestled in supplication, that the Almighty would be a wall of fire about the lad, keeping him from evil: but that day (I wonder if Claud minds it as I do) our anxiety was calmed with a measure of sure confidence, and of trust, in Him that had brought us hitherto, and kepted us in His way.

My mother was sitting in the corner of the pew, feared to look up at first; my father sat at the door with his face (I ever thought him like the beloved Apostle, but never more than on that day) turned steadfast to the pulpit; and I cowered in between them, whiles taking a glance round the

kirk to see how folk attended, and whiles venturing to look up to where my one brother stood up in his young prime, and preached the everlasting Word to the folk that had known him all his days. It might be called sinful pride. I know not, but they would have had strange hearts that said so, after hearing as I did my father's thanksgiving at our evening exercise, and seeing my mother lift up her white face (for she was spent with trouble), and take into her own hand the hand of her one son, and say, "Lord, now letttest thou thy servant depart in peace." Truly it was a blessed night, that, to us—the happiest that had been in the Manse of Pasturelands for many a day!

The beginning of my own life, I need not to dwell on particularly. When I was twelve years old, I finished a sampler which had no equal in the parish, nor near hand it, the which I have now framed in a frame made

for it by James Rule, the joiner, of Burrows-toun. And before that, I mind not anything past the common, seeing that I just learned my lesson, and sewed my seam like other bairns, though it is Claud's word (and doubtless it behoves folk to believe the minister), that my gifts at that time lay more in the way of the idleness of play than any serious avocation.

I mind also that I was set to learn Latin at that season of my life, to encourage Claud, but I am no able to say that I ever had any natural inclination to win into the sepulchre of that dead language, in consequence whereof I never got far on. When I was sixteen, I was sent for a while into Edinburgh, to board with a Miss Scrymgeour, a discreet gentlewoman, who kepted a genteel school for young ladies, to learn divers things that were thought needful in those days, and also how to behave myself in polite society.

Doubtless there are aye changes in manners as well as in folk, and I have never had much troke with strangers. Nevertheless, I am bound to say, that I aye found the breeding of the Manse of Pasturelands to serve me better than what I got in the school at Edinburgh.

And truly if I was going into all that came to pass in the next four or five years of my life, I might soon fill up a printed book; but though I have now gotten into years, and folk may think me past feeling old stounds, yet there are some of these bygone days that I am no able to write about. Doubtless there are great blessings in the season of youth, but also there are sore tribulations; and seeing it was never my will to set my sorrow in the eye of any mortal but my own self, it is not like that I should write it down here, to be read by folk who never heard tell of me

before. The hand of Providence is aye kind, howsoever it may whiles smite.

*That* season was bye when the first of our great family afflictions came upon us—that was the taking up of my father into his Master's house. It was a strange thing to the eyes of many, that he, a man no far past his prime, and with his natural force little abated, should be taken home before my mother, who had for years held a loose grip of the world, and seemed to be aye waiting for the summons; but so it was. It was a sore time, that, in the Manse, and also in the parish of Pasturelands, and I wonder at myself now that I can speak about it so quietly. A year or two before he was gathered to his fathers, Claud had been ordained assistant and successor, so when the funeral was past, (and from the Earl himself, down to Reuben Reid, the west country probationer, that kepted the school

at Sedgie Burn, there was scarce a man in the parish but came to it), we just abode still in the Manse. I think not that my mother (as the common word is) ever held up her head right again—though by reason of having a sure confidence that he for whom we made our lamentation, had entered into his Master's presence with joy and with rejoicing, and been acknowledged before the Father and the holy angels, according to the promise—and also by reason of having a most healthful and well-conditioned spirit, there came again, in time, a measure of sober cheerfulness into her heart and demeanour, and into our household.

It might be about a year after that, when we began to discover that Claud's pony had a particular gift of trotting to Bourtree, and indeed when it was brought out to the Manse door, would scarce ever (for it was a most sensible beast) turn its head to any other

airt. And also, bye and bye, we found out that Claud himself looked down into the seat of the Bourtree family on the Sabbath days, in an uncommon manner, and that Mary Elder, instead of looking straight up at the minister the time of the sermon, as she should have done, hung down her head, and played with her Bible—the which were signs and tokens to us of something coming, for which it behoved us to make preparations. And so it came to pass, for in the autumn of the second year after my father departed, Mary Elder of Bourtree came home to the Manse, to the contentment of all who were concerned, seeing she was of a most pleasant nature, though maybe scarce so douce as a minister's wife needs to be; but that is a thing I am never feared for in a young thing of a sensible and discerning spirit. It aye comes in time, and truly I know not who should be so blythe as them



that have both a pleasant heritage here, and the same sure hope of a pleasanter and better when their day in this world is done.

We had often been advised to change from Pasturelands for a while, for the sake of my mother's health, and now, seeing the servant-maids that had aye been used with my mother and me, might not have given Mary her right place as long as we were in the house, and she was not the one to take it, we made up our minds to flit into a house of our own. Doubtless Claud and Mary were very sweward to let us away; nevertheless, seeing that it was right, (for one habitation should ever have but one mistress,) we abode by our resolve. My mother had some bits of possessions near to Burrowstoun, the yearly rents of which made a good and pleasant addition to our income, and, indeed, would of themselves have been enough for us, seeing we ever

lived in a most quiet manner, and were little in the way of spending siller. Also, there was a house just of a right size for the like of us, with a fine garden round it, and a view of the town from its windows, that was just uncommon for cheeriness. When we were bairns, Claud and me, we aye had a great liking to Sunnyside, and it so happened that the old gentlewoman that lived in it (she was well born, but no way rich, and sat under an easy rental,) had departed this life no long before, and left the house empty; whereupon we made up our minds to establish our tabernacle there.

It was a dull autumn morning when we left our old home, my mother, and me, and Jenny our maid, and flitted into our new one, and the dowie falling of the leaves that bade us farewell at Pasturelands, and the clear chirp of the robin redbreast that welcomed us to Sunnyside, were just like a

publishing of our feelings; for though, doubtless, it was a sad thing to leave the Manse, the which had been a peaceful and pleasant dwelling-place to us all our days, yet it was with a measure of quiet and cheerful composedness that we entered upon our new habitation, seeing that there also the blessing that maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow, might come from the full hand of the Almighty, and dwell upon us. I had got my father's picture hung upon the easter wall in a good light, and also divers of the old furniture from Pasturelands, the oaken book-case, and things of the like age and value, that could go back to Claud's family when we were done with them, for, as was but natural, the Manse had been in a manner new furnished, in preparation for Mary coming home.

Jenny, our maid, was a lass of wonderful spirit, and a most eident nature, and had

wrought in just an uncommon manner to have the house right and home-like when we came, in the which she succeeded well, so that I thought my mother scarce minded whiles that we had really flitted from the Manse. It was well named Sunnyside, that new house of ours, for there was scarce an hour in the day but what in some part or other the sun was shining upon it. There were just enough trees to be a shade, and not so many but what you could see through them (for the thorn hedge was not near so high or so thick then as it is now) whiles a band of playing bairns, or town-wives, or, in the evening, the young folk at their walks, the which was one of the pleasantest sights of all.

We had a peaceful and a happy time of it there in Sunnyside, while my mother abode in this world—for we were ever of one heart and of one mind, and there is no fellowship

that can be in the flesh, like the fellowship of a mother and her only daughter. But woe me, for our mortal blessedness ! we had been so long used to my mother's weakness, Claud and me, that we thought not how surely and speedily it was compassing her end ; but at last, in the pleasant season of spring, three or four years after we went to Sunnyside, it grew so clear, that we could neither doubt nor hope longer, for we saw her gliding away out from the midst of us, like as a mist wreath glides from a hill-side at the rising of the sun.

It was a solemn spring, and a heavy summer to me. We had aye had a reverence for her very weakness, and it seemed in that time as if she stood, like the man in the picture that the Pilgrim saw in the Interpreter's house, with a crown of gold hanging over her head, and the world behind her back ; and oh ! that she could have pleaded

with men, for truly I never mind of hearing as powerful words as fell from her thin white lips, when the breath was sighing away. It was a dreary house when she departed, for the four walls of Sunnyside held a heart like to burst, and many a weary day did I wander about through the house, sick and pining, and thinking every moment that I heard her foot, or her voice crying upon me. But doubtless it is ordained that quietness should come, and it was but myself I had to lament for, and no for her, seeing she also had entered into the Kingdom. Neither did He that took her away leave me without comforters, for besides Jenny, my maid, that (in her degree) was aye labouring to win me out of my sore tribulation, there was Claud, my brother, and Mary (and truly to him, and scarce less to her, it was a most heavy dispensation) that never wearied in ministering to my affliction.

There had two bairns come home to the Manse by that time ; and whiles they were sent to me, and when they began to go trotting about the house, my old spirit was roused in a measure within me, for the boy Claud bore a look of my mother, and spoke words with his bit lipping tongue that minded me of hers ; and the bairn Mary came creeping into my bosom with *her* mother's kindly eye and smile, and I was comforted.

I had a friend in Edinburgh, a Mrs. Stand-right, whose husband had been licensed, and was a probationer of the Kirk ; but being rather stiff and dry in the pulpit, and a great slave to the paper, and being, besides, a man of a conscientious spirit, who would not be intruded into any Kirk by reason of a presentation, without a hearty and Christian call (the which no congregation was ever stirred up to give him), he had wisely sought a way of being useful without striving to ex-

rcise gifts, upon the which Nature had put her tether. So he held a place in Edinburgh, of which I know not the name, but his duties were to have the supervision of many things connected with the whole Kirk, that needed to be in careful keeping, and were over much for the burdened hands of a placed minister. I have seen printed letters many a time lying on the study-table in the Manse, signed with his name, "Gavin Standright;" and any bit collection that they made in Pasturelands was ever sent to him.

So, as I was saying, Mrs. Standright and me were acquainted. When I was dwelling with Miss Scrymgeour, she came to the school there, and, as is commonly the case, when folk are friends in the blythe and aefauld season of youth, the kindness continued all our lives long. She was in the neighbourhood of Burrowstoun at the time I met with my great tribulation (for she had many friends



through the country, and having no bairns, went about a good deal); and truly, she was uncommon kind, coming to see me often, and trying to comfort me, (doubtless I was often sick at heart, and was sore pained with company, but it was aye kindly meant, and folk should take the will for the deed). So it happened a good while after my mother was taken away (indeed it was years, but I mind not at this present time how many of them); when I was calmed and composed in my own spirit, I got a letter from her, in which, after speaking much of my loneliness at Sunnyside, she said, she was going to propose something to me, and that was no less than taking charge of a lady that was not right in her mind. Mrs. Standright did not say that plainly, but she hinted just, that this Miss — (I have forgotten her name, and it makes little matter) needed to be well looked after, and had whiles strange

humours—the which I understood to mean that she had not the right use of her senses.

I was in a manner taken by surprise, and knew not what to think; but after reading the letter over again, and deliberating in my own mind, both that it might be a relief to me to have something of that nature to take up my mind, and also that it might be a task too great for me, seeing I was not so strong as I had been, I thought I would just step ben to the kitchen, and consult with Jenny, my maid,—for Jenny, like myself, had come to ripe years, and had a judgment that I could rely on. Jenny was throng when I went ben, washing the best china tea-things—for Mary, my sister, and Mrs. Elder of Bourtree, and Mrs. Blythe of the Meadows, (James Elder, Mary's brother, and Mr. Blythe, were married upon sisters) had been down at Sunnyside the

night before, with some of the bairns, and had taken a cup of tea with me.

“Jenny,” said I, “I have gotten a letter from Mrs. Standright, and there’s something in it I want to consult you about.” So I read to her that bit of the letter.

Jenny did not speak for a while after I was done, but began building up the cups and saucers upon the little tray (for she was done with washing them) till I was feared they would all be broken; but just as I was going to bid her take care, she turned round about upon me. “A daft leddy!” said Jenny; “and I wad like to ken, Miss Marget, wha wad mint at sending a daft leddy to Sunnyside.”

“It was Mrs. Standright, Jenny,” said I; “and I am no sure but we might do worse than take her.”

Jenny shook her head. “At no hand, Miss Marget. A camstarie daft woman in

*your* peaceable habitation! and they're a' camstarie—and this ane in especial, I'se warrant, seeing she's a leddy, and the like o' them, wise or wud, maun aye hae their ain pleasure: I'm saying, at no hand, Miss Marget, an' ye wad hae ony guid o' your life."

"Well, Jenny," said I, "doubtless it might turn out too great a handful; but then, Mrs. Standright would never have written to me about it, if the poor lady had not been quiet and biddable."

"And her speaks o' humours, Miss Marget!" said Jenny, "the which are unchaury things in wise folk, let alane daft. Keep me! they say the like o' them have the strength o' three men, and us dwelling our leelane, and no a mortal near hand till ye come to Judon Waters's public, and *its* at the fit o' the brae; and afore ane got that length—and it's in no manner credit-

able to hae ony troke wi' a public—there's nae saying what ill might be dune. Na, Miss Marget, neither the Mistress nor the Minister would hear tell o't, I'se undertake for them. If it had been a bit bonnie genty wean, like wee Miss Mary—but a daft leddy!"

So, being mostly of Jenny's mind myself, and after we had some more converse respecting the matter, I went ben and straightway wrote to Mrs. Standright, saying that I could not undertake for the daft lady, but I might take care of a bairn; so what followed upon that will be, in a great part, the subject of what is to be written in this book.

## CHAPTER II.

I ONCE thought when I began to write this, that I might put the letters I got (the which are needful for the right understanding of this history) into an appendix themselves, at the end, as I have seen in books ; but truly that is but a cumbrous way, and I scarce think folk would take the trouble of aye turning to the end to see the letters, for all the good my plain story would do them ; so I will just put them in as I got them. I was not long of getting an answer from Mrs. Standright, and this is it—

“ My dear Margaret,

“ I had your letter, and am sorry you will not engage to receive the poor lady whom I mentioned. To tell the truth, she is rather unmanageable at times, I believe, but easily influenced, and I had hoped that the quietness and beautiful situation of Sunnyside, and your kindness, would have done her great good. However, as you are so decided, I shall say no more about it. But, concerning your other idea, I am very happy to have heard of something which I think may suit you. There is a little girl here, motherless, and not very comfortably situated, whom her friends wish to send to the country. Her mother died, I believe, very shortly after her birth, and she has resided for the greater part of her short life in some obscure village, I think in East Lothian, with the woman who had been her nurse. The child is, I hear, remark-

ably intelligent—somewhat peculiar also, I believe, but that springs from her position, which, poor thing! is none of the happiest. The nurse has left the country lately—gone to America, I believe—and the child is at present in the house of her aunt, Mrs. Lennox, a person of considerable station, and, I hear, great hauteur.

“All this information I have got through an acquaintance of mine, who holds the not very enviable situation of governess in Mrs. Lennox’s family. There are reports, she says, that the child—whose name, by the bye, is Maitland, like your own—will be an heiress; but these reports are contradicted angrily by the aunt. My governess acquaintance, however, holds the truthfulness of her patroness in so small esteem, that she is more inclined to credit the report than the contradiction. As little Grace’s father is living, however, a gay and com-



paratively young man, with every chance of marrying again, I should think her heiressship apocryphal.

“ I have asked my friend to inform the child’s aunt of your eligibility, and will write again whenever I hear from her. Mr. Standright desires to be kindly remembered. If the child goes to Sunnyside, I shall take the opportunity of getting another glance into your hermitage myself, and, in the meantime, believe me,

“ Very truly yours,

“ MARTHA STANDRIGHT.”

Mrs. Standright had a way of writing that put me in mind of business always. If I had forgotten any of the small matters that it fell to my lot to do, I was aye called to the remembrance of it when I saw her clear, fair hand, and read her letters. I know not whether it was the

place her husband was in—for, though he was a minister, he had an office and writing clerks, like any merchantman—that made her so; but it is in the nature of some folk.

But I was greatly pleased with what she said in her letter, and so was Jenny, and much taken up we both were with the thought of little Grace, for doubtless the coming of a bairn into the house would bring in an element of blytheness, the which had for a long time been sorely wanting in Sunnyside. And truly, that very night Jenny began to lay plans for the up-putting of the bairn, and little peace she let me get, with deaving me about buying a little bed, and divers other things, that she said were needful for a bairn. Also she took away my footstools secretly, one at a time, and teased the hair stuffing of them, to make them softer, and other things she did of the

same daft-like nature, which truly made me feared that she was losing her bit portion of understanding, in especial seeing that we were in no manner sure of getting the little girlie, Grace Maitland, to dwell with us. Also I myself doubtless had many cogitations concerning the letter of Mrs. Standright, as to what could make near friends send a bairn away to a strange house, and what like she would be herself, and divers other meditations which it is not needful to come over here.

So we had a measure of perturbation and excitement in our minds, till another letter came from Mrs. Standright, which was a week after that, upon the Saturday. She had sent it with the carrier, for letters were dear by the post-office then. There was not much in it, but it mostly took away my breath. Truly, Mrs. Standright was not given to putting off time.

“ My dear Margaret,  
“ Your little charge, Grace Maitland, leaves Edinburgh with me, for her new home at Sunnyside, on Tuesday morning. I have arranged to stop a night on the road at the house of a friend, so you need not expect us till Wednesday. Good bye.

“ In great haste,

“ MARTHA STANDRIGHT.”

Jenny was half crazy—I myself knew not well what to do ; for, thinking it a mere far-away uncertainty, I had aye put off Jenny when she spoke about the little bed, and the other needful things, till we had some more certain word—and a bairn coming out of such a house ! I had a fear on me, that Saturday night, that Jenny half wished the Sabbath bye, and sore grieved would I have been that the day of rest

should be a weariness to any one belonging to me, for the sake of a carnal and worldly matter like that, and so I told Jenny ; but though she tried to put it out of her mind, I could still see that her hands could hardly bide still, and that she would have liked to begin the work even then, late on the Saturday night, when other thoughts should have been in her head. So, early upon the Monday morning, she had me down to James Rule's shop, in the main street of Burrowstoun—for James was a cabinet-maker as well as a joiner, and a neat-handed, ingenious man. Jenny had seen in his shop a little bed that was just, she thought, the very thing for our bairn, the which James had made when he was slack of work, and had taken particular pains with. A neat bit thing it was, though rather fashioned like a toy. I have ever seen that strong men were as pleased with bonniedies of that

kind, as the youngest bairn could be, and doubtless it was very suitable for us.

So Jenny got her will, and we had hardly made our bargain there, when she would have me away to James Selvage's to buy white dimity for curtains to it, which I did; and James's sister, Miss Janet, who was a single woman, and had a turn for both mantua-making and upholstery, gave me her promise that they would be made, and ready to put up on the Tuesday night. I would have helped her myself, but Jenny whispered me there would be plenty to do at home, which doubtless there was for her, though there was very little she would let me put my hand to. Truly, I know not what had come over Jenny, unless she thought the bairn was going to look through every corner of her new habitation, and forbye was to be a good judge of a well redd up house.

So the Wednesday morning came, and

we were all ready. The little bed was put up, and the white curtains upon it, and the white sheets spread down, like a nest for a bonnie bird. And Jenny had hung up some bits of pictures that were once in my room at the Manse, (but truly folk with sick hearts, and wearing into years like me, think little of the like of these things) and set flowers upon the mantel-piece, and there was the blythe sun shining in, and the honeysuckle waving about the window, like the curls of a bairn's hair, and the pleasant air with the singing of the birds blowing in upon it.

“ It's just a picture, Mem,” said Jenny to me; and indeed I thought myself that it was a very creditable looking room, and that they would be fashious to please, that could not put up with it. So I put on my black silk gown, and Jenny her best cap with the blue ribbons, and we were both ready, and waiting for them. Mrs. Standright did not say

when she would come, and I had a thought it would be by the coach, the which came in at five o'clock in the afternoon ; but, however, before that time, about two in the day, if I mind right, there came a chaise to the door, and there they were. Jenny ran to the outer gate, and I myself also followed, being in a manner perturbed at the coming of a stranger, even though it was only a bairn. So Mrs. Standright came out, and Jenny lifted the little thing on to the road, and set her before me.

She was a bit little thin genty looking bairn, with a face no to be forgotten, though I could not say it was bonnie. There was no colour in her cheeks, and she had dark hair ; but the eyes ! I never saw the like of them. The little face was like a shady corner when they were cast down, and when she lifted them, it was like the rising of the stars in the sky ; no that they were sharp,



but like a deep stream flowing dark and full. Truly my spirit was stirred within me there, standing at the gate of Sunnyside with the bairn's hand in mine, and her eyes shining into me, as if she was reading my very heart; the bit little thing! with the spirit within her that would never die; and I resolved within myself from that day, that the bairn the Lord had sent to my lone and quiet house, should be to me as my own blood and kin.

I had little converse with the bairn the time Mrs. Standright abode at Sunnyside, which was only for three or four hours, seeing she was going to the Manse of Rures, and had trysted the gig to come for her at six o'clock. Mrs. Flyter of Rures (for it was before Mr. Shepherd's time), was a far away connexion of Mr. Standright's, and truly we two had so many Edinburgh things to discourse about, that I had not so much

mind of little Grace, till Mrs. Standright was 'going away. But as she was leaving the room, she said to me in a mirthful way :—

“ Now mind, Margaret, your little ward will perhaps be an heiress some day.”

So I went with her to the door, and saw her away in Mr. Flyter's gig upon the road to Rures, and as I came into the parlour again, I was thinking about the bairn, and that it was not wise of Mrs. Standright to say that before her, when suddenly I felt something pull my gown, and then there was a bit clear voicie at my knee, asking me :

“ Madam, what is an heiress ?”

The bairn's face was most grave, and had not so much as a smile upon it.

“ Truly, my dear,” said I, “ they are a kind of folk that neither you nor me have much to do with at this present time. They

are gifted with houses and land, and riches, but in other ways I am thinking they are just like common folk."

"Because," said little Grace, lifting up her head in a proud way, "they called me names in Edinburgh, and said I did wrong, and I did not. It was not true."

"My dear," said I, "then shall nobody call you names in Sunnyside."

"And I have no houses, nor lands, Madam," said the bairn. "I am not an heiress. I do not think it is a good thing."

"We will try to make you a lady, Grace," said I, "and you will be pleased with that, will you no?"

"I do not like ladies, Madam," said little Grace, "for they never smile. I have seen them in Edinburgh."

And with that the bairn stopped and raised up her bit figure, as I have seen grown up folk do, when they have gotten

cause of offence, but are too proud to speak about it. "My nurse who cared for me was not a lady. Are you a lady?"

I could scarce laugh at the bairn when she said that, for her eyes were so grave.

"I am not like to be the best judge of that myself, Grace," said I; "maybe you will find it out by and bye, but what for do you think that ladies never smile?"

"Because I have seen them, Madam," said Grace. "They laugh many times, but they do not smile. Madam, may I go out and see the flowers?"

So I called upon Jenny, seeing that she also would have a measure of curiosity about the bairn, to come and take little Grace out to the garden. And truly I was blythe to have a while to myself to consider about the bairn. She looked not more than eight, if I judged right; but had a bit proud way of holding up her head, and a walk like a little

princess, and aye the clear grave voice when she spoke, that might have been a woman's for its sedateness. And also the word "Madam," which is in no manner a common word, especially among bairns, though there was a stateliness about the little thing that made it becoming.

I was near thinking myself a lady of the old times, that had a queen's daughter to bring up, (as is often written in ballads); for doubtless Grace had a look about her far from the common. The window was open, I mind, that afternoon, and it was a pleasant thing to hear the little feet pattering about the walks, and the clear voice among the trees, but I noticed that she was not of the merry turn that is common at her years, but spoke to Jenny in a quiet manner, as she did to me: at the which I marvelled, for the two bairns at the Manse, Claud and Mary, (Mary might be maybe a year younger

than Grace, and Claud two or three years older) had just in a bye-ordinary manner the gift of making a noise, and on common occasions, could scarce be kept still five minutes at a time ; and their cousins, the little Elders of Bourtree, and also Mrs. Blythe's bairns, were just as bad.

But all that night, though I heard the bit pleasant tongue sounding in the air, I heard nothing like a laugh, the which I was sorry for ; for if there be not a measure of pleasantness in that blythe morning season of youth, when shall it be ? No when the young spirit is standing on the edge of this world's tribulations, and knows not the sore plunge that is at its foot. It may be that that time has the brightest look, but truly it is but a glint, and departs oftenest in trouble and pain ; and therefore my heart aye yearns over the playing bairns, that they may have their portion of innocent pleasantness, before ever their

bits of mind are troubled with a thought of the weird that may be waiting on them. But that is not the thing I was going to write about.

So when the dew began to fall, I called Jenny to bring Grace in, seeing she looked but delicate like, and might get cold; and then we got the books, sooner than our ordinary, that the bairn, being doubtless wearied with her travel, might be put to her bed. I saw by little Grace's look that our exercise was no a thing she had been used to, but it was aye a comfort to mind that she was at a good age for learning, and could not be in any uncommon manner habited to ill, by reason of her years, poor bit thing! And so I took her myself to put her to her bed, and when we had come into the room, I asked her if she liked it.

“Yes, Madam,” she said, “because the

moon will come in, and I can see the sky.”

And with that she stopped, and looked up through the window, with a look upon her bit white face of that dowie and pining feeling that will come into folk’s heads (I know by myself) upon a summer night,—but truly the like of these thoughts are no for bairns. So I helped her to take off her dress, and when she was near ready, I said to her :

“ Grace, you have not said your prayers yet.”

The little thing’s face grew quite red, and she said :—

“ Madam, I will say my prayers to God.”

“ And in what manner do you do that, Grace?” said I, for I wanted to know what she understood concerning the exercise.

The little head rose higher, I thought, in its proud way, and Grace said : “ Madam,



I look up to Heaven where God is. I do not say my prayers to any one but God."

I could not well discern much understanding of the true way of acceptance in what the bairn said ; nevertheless, seeing it was the first night, I just told her to be sure and not forget, and then I went down the stairs to the parlour again. Jenny was waiting for me there, and full Jenny was about little Grace, and had much to say concerning her, which it is not needful to put down here. Also, I myself was drawn to the bairn in an uncommon manner, and when I went into my room that night, and stood beside the little bed before I lay down, truly I felt as if she was henceforward to belong to my own self. I had hardly seen what like her face was right before, for there was aye the eyes looking into me, but now it was like a picture to see her. The head and the dark

hair covered with the bit cap, and the long eyelashes hanging over the little white cheek, as if they were painted upon it, and the lips shut firm, and the whole face with its proud look, even though deep sleep was upon it.

I went to my bed that night with almost a fear upon my mind ; for the charge of a young thing like that, was a great handful for a single gentlewoman like me, that knew little about the care of bairns.

So upon the next day (being the Thursday) after the breakfast and the exercise was past, I took Grace out with me to take a walk, and also to see Burrowstoun. It happened that Jenny being proud of the look the bairn had, (and truly I have seen few like her for demeanour) came to the outer gate to see us away, and the time I was putting on my glove, she broke a long wand off one of the thorn bushes, and put into Grace's hand. So we went our ways down to the town.

The main street of Burrowstoun opened just opposite to Sunnyside, though it was at the foot of the brae. It is true that the public kept by Gideon Waters, is no far below the ash tree, and it is counted to be half way up, nevertheless the street does not begin right till you win to the foot. I saw when we were in the town, that the wives at the door were looking at Grace, and wondering who she would be, and remarking upon her apparel, (the which being made in Edinburgh, was neater than the common) and truly I was not ill-pleased. So we came to the shop of Mrs. Rasp, the baker, as I had something to say to Mrs. Rasp anent the bread, and Jenny had asked me to bid her send up some biscuits for Grace. So as Mrs. Rasp was standing at her door, we did not go in, but just spoke to her there.

It so happened that at that time there was

coming up through the middle of the street, a lad with a cart full of stones, seeing they were repairing some old houses no far off. The cart was heavily loaded, and the horse stumbling and swearing to climb the brae, for it was just where the road began to ascend; and as he came to where we were standing, the lad lost patience with the poor beast, and began to lash it with his whip. I was grieved and vexed at that, and was just turning about to speak to him, when Mrs. Rasp pointed me to Grace. The bairn had grown taller as it seemed to me, and forward she went to the lad with her little proud head held up, and her arm lifted, and her hand with the wand in it, that Jenny had given her.

“ If you strike the poor horse again,” said little Grace, “ I will strike you.”

And truly the bit thorn branch would have

come down upon him, without either pause or fear.

It might be thought that the lad would either have been wrathful, or laughed in a coarse way, as the manner of them is ; but it was not so, for he was a good-natured lad in the main, though a thought hasty (also I had helped his mother at odd times, when the meal was dearer than common) and hung down his head before the bairn with a feeling, doubtless, that he deserved the reproof he had gotten so strangely.

“ But you’ll no need, my little ledly,” he said, “ though maybes I do deserve my paiks for bringing the puir beast up the brae wi’ sic a cartfu’ ; but it’s an illwilly brute, and sets ane’s bluid up, when ane suld maybe hae patience ; I’ll hae him off round the howe, there’s nae sic rough grund there.”

And the lad fairly turned his cart, (the

name of him was James Laidlaw, he was ever a well-conditioned lad), and took it to the place a roundabout way, hanging down his head and thinking shame. And back came my little Grace to my side, with the wand in her hand, and stood beside me as grave, and as quiet as if she had been the lady of the whole town, and was in no manner surprised that folk should do her bidding.

“ Grace,” said I, “ what was that you were saying to the carter lad ?”

“ Madam,” said Grace, “ he was doing wrong, and I told him.”

“ But, Grace,” said I, “ you are only a bairn ; you could not think yon big grown up lad would do what you bad him.”

“ He was doing wrong,” said Grace.

“ And if you had struck him, Grace,” said I, “ think you, that would have been right ?”

What a pride there was in the high holding of that little head !

“ Yes, Madam,” said the bairn in her stately way, “ because I knew that he was doing wrong, and *he* knew it too.”

“ Preserve us a’ !” said Mrs. Rasp, “ but the wee leddy can keep her ain pairt. She’ll haud ye in wark at Sunnyside, Miss Maitland. I’m jealousing Jenny will hardly like to find the wee Missie’s wand on her shoulders ; but folk get used to a’thing.”

Grace turned round and looked into Mrs. Rasp’s face with her shining eyes, but it did not seem that she thought it worth her while to answer. So having done our errand we came away ; and then she took hold of my hand, and lifted up her eyes, and said to me :

“ Madam, will you teach me how to do right always ?”

So I smiled, and said I :

“ I will try, Grace.”

And Grace seemed to take heart at that, for she went on with her bit face full of earnestness.

“ Madam, I have seen many people who do wrong ; but I wish to do right, only I do not know sometimes. Madam, do you think I am not speaking true ?”

“ No, my dear,” said I, “ what way do you ask me that ?”

“ Because you shook your head, Madam,” said the bairn, looking up to me in an eager manner, “ and I always say what is true, and if you will teach me what is right, I will never do wrong.”

Woes me for the bairn's confidence ! I could not get much said to her at that time ; but truly I saw that there would be a difficulty in the right up-bringing of her, that I had



not thought of; for the pride that sat so well upon the bit little firm figure at my foot, had struck its roots deep into her nature as I saw, and would be ill to subdue.

We had one or two other places to call at, and then we set our faces to go home to Sunnyside. It so happened that it was just the time for the school skaleing, and as we went up past it, the bairns were standing on the road-side in bands, looking at the stranger; and I heard first one and then another, whispering about the "wee leddy," as they called her. And Grace looked at them like a grown up gentlewoman, taking no heed of their wonder and whispers; but smiling to herself when she saw them racing and chasing one another over the brae, and down into the hollows at the back of the town.

I know not which of us looked the most womanly like, me that had more than thirty

years over my head, or the bairn in my hand that had scarce got her first look of life. And I have thought many times since, that it would have been hard to say which of us had the gravest cogitations, for there is something that I have aye looked upon with a kind of reverence in the thoughts of these little folk, that are strangers in the world.

## CHAPTER III.

THE first week of Grace's sojourn at Sunnyside, was past before we had any visitors from Pasturelands ; but the next week was the preachings at Burrowstoun, and the minister, my brother, was to preach upon the Fastday, so Mary and the two bairns came over with him to see us. It was not Grace's custom to speak to strangers, but she looked into their faces commonly, as folk would look at a picture that carried a parable in it, with an earnest and steadfast eye, that seemed as if it could interpret every line in the face into

a meaning, and could read the changes of the countenance like the pages of a printed book. Little Mary and her were friends soon, but at the rest the bairn looked in her steadfast manner, as if she wanted to be friends with them too, but was not sure how to do.

“ Your little ward is not pretty, Margaret,” said my brother to me.

Grace’s face was lying in shadow, for her eyes were cast down, and, whether she heard him or no, I cannot tell ; but she lifted them quick, and looked in his face. Claud started, and went on with his speech, bringing out the words, as Jenny said, with a yerk, for he was greatly astonished.

“ But wonderfully intelligent ! What an expression there is in her eyes.”

And truly I was well pleased that Claud thought that, seeing the bairn, Grace, was

winning about my heart more and more every day. The whole time they were at Sunnyside, and also in the Kirk, I could not but notice how her face turned to the minister. Her eyes would travel round them all, and abide a while here, and a while there, but they aye ended with fixing on my brother. He was in his prime then, my brother Claud, and though maybe folk may think I should not say it, yet he ever bore in his face a grave nobleness, that made folk think of him as of a Prince in Israel. And doubtless it was also pleasant to me, that the bairn should come to that judgment, seeing I have a kind of confidence in the first thoughts of bairns.

I could not say that day, that little Claud my nephew, and Grace, seemed to take much to one another ; for Claud was a stirring boy, and indeed sometimes a thought wild in his play, and when the bairns went out together

into the garden, was tempting Mary, as I could hear from the window, to run races and climb trees; and whiles, I am sorry to say, to tease Jenny. None of which things Grace cared for, and Claud was ill-pleased that the stranger should be careless about the play herself, and also be keeping his sister little Mary in a measure of quietness, and paying no heed to him. I made Mary, my sister, promise, when they went away that night, that she would send them over often to see Grace and me, at Sunnyside; and Claud had near got a chastisement, for saying privately to Jenny, that he did not like the "wee lady," and would not come to play with her. But little Mary was entirely the other way, and we could scarce get her parted from Grace. It is strange the odds that there is in bairns!

"Well, Grace," said I, that night, when

they were all away, and we were sitting alone,  
“ how do you like your new friends ?”

“ I do not know, Madam,” said Grace.

“ You do not know, Grace ?” said I, for I was disappointed ; but Grace sat still on her little stool at my foot, and looked at me, and said nothing.

“ Do you like Mary, Grace ?” said I, “ I am sure you know that.”

“ Yes, Madam,” said Grace, “ I like Mary.”

“ And do you no like Claud also ?” said I.

“ No, Madam.”

Truly it is not common to hear even bairns speak so truthfully.

“ I am sorry for that Grace,” said I :  
“ and what for do you no like Claud ?”

“ I do not know, Madam,” said Grace,  
“ but I would like to be Claud’s sister.”

“ And wherefore, my dear ?” said I.

“ Because then Mr. Maitland would be my father, Madam.”

“ Then you like Mr. Maitland, Grace,” said I, for truly I was pleased that the innocent thing should set a value on him, that was my own pattern of every good in mankind.

Grace drooped her little head upon her hand, and sat a while without speaking a word ; at last she turned to me with her eyes shining like the very light, and said she :

“ Madam, do you know *my* father ?”

The question was so quick, that it started me.

“ No, Grace,” said I, “ I do not know your father.”

“ He is a bad man,” said the bairn very low.



“Bairn!” said I, “what is that you are saying?”

The little thing looked thoughtful like again, and then she asked me :

“Does Mr. Maitland ever do any thing that is wrong?”

“Truly, Grace,” said I, “we all do that.”

“Madam, does Mr. Maitland do wrong?” said Grace, with her bit proud manner, as if she thought I was not answering right.

“Doubtless he does whiles, Grace,” said I, “but his desire is far other, only we are weak folk, and soon overcome with evil.”

I could see Grace was not satisfied, and after she had been quiet a while, she asked me :

“Madam, do you ever do wrong?”

“Yes, Grace,” said I with more seriousness, “it’s my grief that I am doing ill every

day : ill in the sight of God—though maybe man may not see that it is sin.”

The bairn’s eyes opened up wider, and she gave me a feared glance.

“ I do not know about that, Madam,” she said, “ but *I* shall not do wrong. I will not, Madam. I have seen bad people often, but I will not be like them. I shall always do right.”

And the little breastie heaved, and the bit cheek grew red, the bairn was so earnest.

“ And what is *right*, Grace ?” said I, for I wanted to see what knowledge she had.

“ I have read of people who did right,” said Grace, with the colour mounting upon her cheek, “ and I will be like them. When I am a woman, Madam, I will give the poor people food and houses to live in, and I will take the little children and teach them ; and I will get doctors to make the sick people

well. Madam, I wish I was a woman ! for then I would go away through all the world, and help every one who was in need, and make them all happy—if they did right !”

“ My bairn,” said I, for truly I was moved with her speech, “ there is One that is aye watching for the good of all people. And can you no tell me who that is ?”

Grace gave me a wistful and half feared look, but she did not answer.

“ It is God !” said I, “ and He sends down His rain, and His sun, upon the just and upon the unjust ; for God is more merciful than man.”

Grace drew herself a little back from me. The poor bairn knew not God.

“ Madam,” she said in a kind of whisper, for though she had not much knowledge concerning it, there was yet an awe in her mind

at that name. " I will be merciful, I will be good. I will try to bring the bad people to do right, and I will never do wrong."

The poor bairn ! If the law had been written but upon *one* table, as the sinful folk of this generation would say it was, then the bairn's spirit might have been perfect in the sight of man. But when I thought upon the *first* table of that grand and perfect law, and on the sore sin of all mankind in the breaking of it, and on Him that was our ransom from the house of bondage, truly my spirit was stirred within me to bring this bairn that He had brought to my household, to the knowledge of His name. So I made up my mind, to begin Grace the very next day with right lessons, and to use her to the daily reading of the Word, that her mind might be enlightened in the truth.

I had converse with Jenny that same night

respecting her, for Mrs. Rasp had been telling Jenny what Grace said to the carter lad.

“ But, Mem,” said Jenny to me, “ the bairn has an unco spirit and will tak’ guid guiding and strick guiding, and if we haena a’ the better care o’ oursels, she’ll be getting the upper hand o’ us, I’m misdoubting.”

“ Whisht Jenny,” said I, “ it’s Mrs. Rasp, the gabbing body, that’s put that into your head.”

“ Na, na, Miss Marget,” said Jenny, “ I’m no needing to tak my thoughts from ony Mrs. Rasp, (set her up wi’ a mistress! as if Nannie Moulins wasna a guid eneugh name for the like o’ her!) I hae an e’e in my ain head, be thanked, and if I’m no sair mistaen, our wee Miss Grace is o’ the kind, that maun hae their ain will, and hae a necessity

to rule ower ither folk also, but doubtless it's nae business of mine."

"But surely, Jenny," said I, for I was perturbed at what she said, "you would not like to send the bairn away again, and her been so short a time at Sunnyside?"

"Me!" cried out Jenny, "truly I wad be laith and wae to part wi' the wean, for it mak's the house lightsome; but an it's your will, Miss Marget, doubtless it maun be dune: it's no my place to say a word."

"Dear me, Jenny," said I, "it was yourself that was speaking about it."

"Eh, Miss Marget," said Jenny in a reproachful way, "to think that you would say the like o' that! Truly I was meditating in my ain mind, what the minister said in his Action sermon, the Occasion after Mrs. Blythe, o' the Meadows lost her twa youngest, that

bairns were but borrowed blessings, and no to be lipped to for a continuance; and I thought to mysel, if our Miss Grace was to tak' the measles like wee Miss Jeanie Blythe, or the king-cough like Tammie Little, or the—”

“Whisht Jenny,” said I; “or for any sake, do not speak about these fearsome things.”

“And the kingcough's in the toun,” said Jenny, as if she was speaking to herself; “but as I was saying, Miss Marget, the bairn has a bit proud way wi' her, that gars ane be pleased when she taks to them, I kenna how it is. There was wee Miss Mary nae further gaen than this very afternoon gae up a' her ain plays to walk wi' the wee leddy, and even my very sel, like an auld fuil as I am, crap near the bairns to hear the stories she was telling.”

“Stories!” said I; “does Grace tell stories, Jenny?”

“Deed does she, Miss Marget; stories about this ane and the other ane that hae dune *richt*, as the bairn ca’s it, and helpit them that were in distress a’ through the world—and what she’ll do hersel, puir bit thing, when she’s a grown up leddy. I used to be reckoned a guid hand at the fairy stories, Miss Marget, but Miss Grace beats me.”

So I told Jenny that it was my intent to begin Grace with the questions, and other things needful to be learned upon the next day, (though it *was* the Friday before the Sacrament); the which Jenny approved of greatly, and after some more converse, we parted, and went to our beds—her to sleep soon and sound, and be up with a light heart in the early morning, and me to



ponder on the charge that had been so strangely put upon me, of bringing this little thing to His feet, who took bairns in his arms and blessed them.

So upon the next day we began with our lessons, and truly, seeing I was in no manner used to teaching, I think we came on just wonderful well—for Grace had a most quick understanding. She was a good reader, and for her years had read much, though it had been mostly idle stories, and the kind called novels, the which (though I think not they are so ill at an odd time, when folk need a rest to their minds) were just like to raise up higher the natural pride of the bairn, and to fill her bit head full of all manner of fancies. So for the reading lessons we had, as was meet, the History of Scotland, which I ever like best among all histories, both because it is my

own country, and because no man can read it, and look upon this land (which without doubt is a most peaceable and pleasant country to dwell in, above most) without seeing that it is the Word that has made it what it is, and that truly Godliness is profitable to all things. Also we read in the Book itself every day, in a reverent and becoming manner, and also the bairn learned, and, it's my hope, understood the questions. And so in process of time (though I know not that the spirit itself was right awakened, till my Grace was winning into womanly years) the shadows departed, and the grandness and perfectness of the one Gospel, entered into the mind of the bairn.

But truly it is needless for me to write all this down here, except it was for the behoof of them that have the bringing up of young

folk in their hands, and I am blythe to see that there is more heed given to that now, than used to be in the days of my youth, though for all that, I am doubtful if there are more folk at this time bringing up their bairns in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, than there were then.

It was a very quiet life we lived at Sunnyside, and past the lessons, and now and then a visit from the Manse family, I mind not anything that it is needful to notice. As Grace grew older, I had whiles a drither in my own mind touching her education, but seeing there was never a word said about it by her friends in Edinburgh, (and truly they could not think that she would get any bye-ordinary schooling off the bit little stipend of thirty pounds a year) and that Grace herself would not hear of going to Miss Perjinck's school, I just gathered up

in my own mind, the bits of fragments of what I learned at Miss Scrymgeour's, in Edinburgh, that she might not want anything that I myself could give her. But truly sometimes it was a sore trial to me, seeing it brought the troublous times of my young days before me, as clear as if the bygone years were but the moments of a cloudy dream—in especial, when I was learning her (so far as my poor skill went) to play music, the which I had liked well in the days of my great gladness and my sore tribulation.

It is a marvellous thing the power that there is in the old tunes that have been dwelling about a country-side for many generations; and how they will bring up old things and old faces before folk, like as the shadows rose on the mirror in the story; and also how voices will mix in them, whiles voices that

will sound in this weary earth never more, and whiles them that have been parted from us by a sorer parting than that of death—even the parting of change and of sin—so truly it was sometimes a grief and a pain to me in that matter, even though it was learning Grace. Neither can I say that Grace herself had any great enjoyment in the playing of music, saving now and then in the gloaming, when there was little else to do. Whatever was to be gotten in books, Grace took up at her own hand, not only the ones I had, for she soon knew them mostly off by heart, though I have aye kepted the old oaken book-case well filled, but also the minister, my brother's, and I have heard him say that if he sent Grace, (for she was much at the Manse) into the study in the dark, to bring him a book, she would find it far sooner than either

Mary or Claud. Also the bairn—in what manner I know not—came to an ability to read books in unknown tongues, whereat I marvelled, for besides what I learned her myself, and a lesson with Claud, whiles, from the minister, and one quarter at the ladies' school, which Mrs. Primrose and Miss Violet, her daughter, kepted in Pasturelands, the which Mary my niece went to, I know not any other learning she had.

And when the bairns from the Manse came to Sunnyside, we were like to be driven out sometimes, Jenny and me,—for when they got Grace wiled into their plays, she seemed to put new life into them, but she aye liked better to have them all gathered round her in converse about the things they read, and telling stories.

I mind being diverted one winter night when I went ben to the kitchen where they all

were. They were sitting about a bright fire, Grace and Claud and Mary, and Jenny among them also, throng in the converse. I had given them all prize-books a while before, concerning the old Covenanters in the persecuting times, and they were speaking about them. "And, bairns," I heard Jenny say, as I stood at the door, watching them, "what wad ye hae dune, think ye, if the Lord had cast your lot in times like thae? The bairns langsyne could na get cracking about thae things by the fire-side."

"Oh!" said my niece, little Mary, "if I had been born then, Jenny, I would have run away to the cave at Blackcleugh, where the good Covenanter lay, and I would have hid myself there, and prayed to God for the wicked persecutors, and sung 'the Lord's my shepherd' as the Covenanters did."

“I would not have prayed for Claverhouse,” cried out Claud, rising up off his seat; “I would have got a gun, and the sword our forefather had at Drumclog, and gone out to the hills for the Kirk and the Covenant. I wished I had lived then, Jenny: I would have fought for the Kirk.”

“And what wad *ye* hae dune, Miss Grace?” said Jenny; “it’s no often *ye’re* the last to answer.”

The bit little face was shining like as with a light.

“I would have gone with Claud,” said Grace, “but I would not have taken a sword or a gun, for ladies do not fight. I would have told the persecutors they were killing God’s people, and He would fight for them. Jenny, why did God suffer them to live?”

That was too hard a question for Jenny



to answer, and indeed when I went forward myself, it took me speaking a long time or I could get the bairn convinced, that God suffered ill men longer, than their frail mortal neighbours are like to do.

## CHAPTER IV.

IF I was to go on in this way, putting down everything that came to pass the time Grace was a bairn, truly I am feared folk would think that my story was to have no end. But as I have aye an eye to making it a feasible length, I will just pass over a while, for though there were many diverting and plenty pleasant things connected with the growing up to woman's estate of the two bairns, Grace and Mary, and the sending away to college of the stirring through-other boy, my nephew

Claud, I think not that stranger folk are like to be greatly taken up with them, though doubtless their bits of mishaps and pleasures were of much import to us, seeing they were our own bairns.

So I will make my right history begin just after Grace's tenth year at Sunnyside was past. It was a bye-ordinary pleasure to us all to see the two young things in their upgrowing, twining about one another like flowers in the early summer time, though they ever kept the different looks and dispositions that were natural to them. Mary (we aye called her little Mary, though she was nearly a head higher than Grace, and indeed as tall as myself) was just Mary Elder of Bourtree over again — a blythe bairn, with neither fear nor suspicion of any ill about her, and a byepast life, of seventeen years that had been like a summer-

day. Forbye that, there was the bit spark of an impatient temper within her, the which I am no able to say, made the resemblance less, though sure am I that you could not find now in all Scotland a more sedate or peaceable minister's wife than Mary, my sister, for all that she was something quick of spirit in the days of her youth.

And Grace was the same in her proud manner of bearing herself as when she came to Sunnyside; and had still the deep and wonderful e'en, and a look like some royal thing, whose nature it was to be obeyed. No that I would have folk think that my bairn was of a haughty nature, or took much upon her; far from that, I never saw one, gentle or simple, that pretended or assumed less; but there was aye something in her eye, and in her spirit, that ruled folk, whether they would

or no. It was a marvel to me that there should be such an entire affection between Mary and her, but so it was; you would scarce have thought that the one could live without the other.

But the time was drawing near of a sore trial both to them and me. From the time that Grace came to Sunnyside, except in the regular payment of the bit stipend that I got for her, we heard nothing of her grand friends in Edinburgh. And truly I often marvelled that a young thing with so warm a heart, should care so little about her own kin. But one October morning I was thrown into great tribulation by getting a letter from Mrs. Standright, which I will here put in.—

“My dear Margaret,

“I am afraid I have a piece of most unwelcome news to tell. Yesterday I was

favoured with an unexpected and rather formidable visit, from no less a person than the aunt of your little charge, Grace Maitland, (by the bye I fancy she will scarcely like to be called little now). Mrs. Lennox's errand was to inquire particularly the place where her niece resided, and to intimate her intention of recalling her; I fear the exchange will not be to the young lady's liking, unless she can take her aunt's advantages of station and externals as a compensation for what she will lose in you. Mrs. Lennox is to communicate with you herself, but I thought it right to give you early notice of her intention, in case Miss Grace needs preparation in wardrobe or any other way, for making the transition from Sunnyside to Edinburgh.

“ Yours truly,

“ MARTHA STANDRIGHT.”

It came with a sore stound to my heart that letter, and I had near been angry at Mrs. Standright for thinking that the dear bairn's apparel would be a matter of concernment to me, when I had the prospect of losing her that had been my companion and comfort for so many years. After I had read the letter, I put it into Grace's hands without saying a word, and sat down upon my seat to watch her, marvelling within myself whether she would be glad or sorry to go away. Truly Sunnyside was a quiet place, and me but a humble woman compared to the like of Mrs. Lennox; nevertheless, she was in a manner my own bairn, and, maybe it was a selfish thing, but I would have had a sore heart had Grace been blythe to leave me. But the bairn sate, I mind not how long, with the letter in her hands, and her head bent

down, and never said a word. So at last I began myself.

“ Grace,” said I, “ I am feared you will think I have given you but an ill preparation for entering upon the like of such a new and grand life as that, but, my dear bairn, it was not my blame.”

Grace looked up into my face with a smile, though I saw that her lip trembled, and truly so did mine.

“ Aunt,” she said, (for she had called me by that name for long), “ why do you say that to me ?”

My heart was troubled, for I feared that the glitter of that unquiet world had beguiled Grace, and that she would be pleased with its vanities.

“ Truly, my dear,” said I, “ I should have minded that you were come of folk great in this world, and needed a different up-bringing



from the like of Mary, but you know; yourself, that when the Italian gentleman that learns the young ladies at Miss Perjinck's school to sing songs, came to Sunnyside, you fleeced me till I sent him away again, and you mind how you would not sew the fine white sampler that Mrs. Perjinck sorted for you with her own hand, that was to have had a house upon it. Doubtless these are but small things, Grace, my dear, but it will make my heart sorer in the pairting, if anything can do that, to think that I have not brought you up right as a lady should, and your aunt—"

The bairn sprang off her seat, with her e'en burning like lights, when I spoke that word.

"My aunt!" she cried out, in a wild way. "I have no aunt, no friend, out of Sunnyside."

“Whisht, Grace,” said I.

“Why should I, aunt,” said Grace. “Call her—call this Mrs. Lennox, by any name you please, but not by that. I cannot bear it: it is sacrilege, aunt. The one name that has embodied all kindness, all tenderness to me, to give it to *her*.”

“My bairn,” said I, “this lady is not known to you, except, maybe, by a faint glimmering of remembrance. Doubtless, she will have it in her power to be far better to you than I have been, though I think not any mortal could like you better.” And with that the tears came into my eyes, even against my will.

The e'en of my Grace needed not anything to give them more power than they had by nature, but now they were flooded full like the sea at night, though no tears fell, and the bairn stood beside me, leaning her hand upon

the back of my chair, and with her face filled with thoughtfulness ; and for a while there was no more converse between us. But just as I had composed myself, and was going to say something more, I mind not what, Grace said to me, "Aunt, if Mrs. Lennox sends for me, must I go—am I bound?"

"Without doubt, Grace, my dear," said I. "It will be a dreary house when you are away, but I dare not bid you be rebellious, and sin—and as long as the fifth command stands, you are bound. Oh, my bairn ! let us do our endeavour no to murmur at the providence of the Lord."

"Aunt," said Grace, speaking so low that I could scarce hear her, "they do not care for me—I am nothing to them. God's providence brought me to Sunnyside, and will the same Hand build and overthrow?"

"Yes, Grace," said I, "the same Hand

builds and overthrows, and it is never lifted but in wisdom. My dear, you do ill to speak so of your own kindred, but if it was even so, that would not free you. You are but a bairn yet in years; you are no able, Grace, to make such a judgment for yourself."

There came a sick and faint smile upon the face of my bairn, and then it melted away, and she leaned her head upon my shoulder, and I felt that her heart was sick within her, and that the tears could be kept down no longer. It was not in Grace's nature to show either her tribulation or her joyfulness by outward tokens; but at that season, the spirit was so sorely troubled, that I felt the bit frail tabernacle shake and tremble, and the tears falling like rain. But that was soon past, and she lifted up her head again with a firm and calm sorrow-

fulness in it, and said, (truly it is what all bairns say in their first tribulation, little thinking, poor things, how many sorrows they must bear, and get the better of, before the end comes), "I shall never be happy, aunt, after I leave Sunnyside; but if I must go, I will not complain."

There was no more to be said after that; even Jenny, though she got up a great cry of lamentation when she heard of it, was hushed again in a moment, before the quiet demeanour of my Grace. But I knew well that it was not because Grace felt it little. There was a deep soil in her heart, and whatever moved her, struck its roots far down, out of the sight of any mortal.

It may be well thought that we watched with trembling, after that, for the post time, and, indeed, it was not more than a week after, when the letter that we were so

feared for, came. It was but a small note, and was sealed with a fine seal, having a crest cut upon it, and directed in the hand which I have heard called Italian, the kind with the corners, which ladies seem aye to practice. My fingers shook so that I could hardly open it.—

“ Madam,

“ I believe that a young relation of mine, Miss Grace Maitland, of Oakenshaw, has been for some time residing with you, and under your charge. I expect to find that the young lady’s education has been attended to, according to your opportunities. I intend myself to resume the charge of my niece, and beg to request that you will prepare her for proceeding to Edinburgh on Friday next, the 20th inst. My own maid, whom I shall send to your

residence on Thursday, will attend Miss Maitland on the journey. As the young lady's wardrobe is not likely to consist of articles suitable for her use while residing with me, I beg that you will incommode her with no more than is absolutely necessary for her use, until she can have a proper supply.

“HARRIET LENNOX.”

Edinburgh, October 12.

On Friday! it was Saturday then—the dear bairn that had come in among us like the sunshine, to be so hurried away! I could not speak to her for grief, and for a full hour after that, Grace spoke no word to me, but sat with the letter in her hand, and her eyes burning like fire, and a colour upon her cheek that shook

and wavered like the coming and going of breath.

“Grace,” said I, when I could command my voice, which was not for a long time, “Grace—” I was not prepared for what was coming.

“The unjust, haughty, heartless woman!” burst out Grace. “See, aunt, she commands me, she would insult you, and this is the person whom I must obey!”

“My dear,” said I, “it may be but her manner; she has doubtless no unkind meaning.”

“You do not think so, aunt,” said Grace, “and why should she—why should any other, have a *manner* by right of which they shall insult their neighbours? Aunt, are you angry? do you think I am too violent?”



“I am grieved, Grace,” said I, “to see your spirit set against your own nearest kin. I doubt not but this lady, when you know her, will be a mother to you.”

The letter fell out of Grace’s hand, and her head bowed down. “Who was my mother when I came to Sunnyside?” she said. “Not this proud Mrs. Lennox, who sent the desolate child away because she disliked its white face—not the haughty lady who taunted me and scorned me—oh! aunt—aunt!”

“Grace,” said I, in a serious way, “I never heard a word of this before; you are no like yourself to-day.”

Grace was silent for a while. “No, aunt,” she said, at last, “I am not like myself to-day, or you should never have heard these childish causes of my feeling towards Mrs. Lennox; but words sting terribly sometimes.

Mrs. Lennox did not like ugly children. Nay, do not look upon me so, aunt: I will not be discontented. Oh! I will be dutiful, obedient, pretty-behaved—the very model and pattern of young ladies!”

“Grace,” said I, quietly, “is that a right spirit to begin in?”

Grace brought the stool that she used to sit on when she was a little bairn, to my feet, and sat down there.

“I will tell you what I will do, aunt,” she said; “when I feel rebellious, I will but close my eyes, and imagine myself at home among the Sunnyside trees, or sitting at your feet, and my spirit will grow meek within me like your own. Do not be very angry if some bitterness mingles with my thoughts concerning that lady relative of mine; but you shall see how I will overcome it—since I must.”

“ Ay, Grace,” said I, “ I wish I could only see ; but henceforth, I am thinking, I must be content to hear. You will write to me, Grace ?”

Grace’s features changed for a moment like the branches of some tree tossed by a strong wind. “ Aunt,” she said, taking firm hold of my hand, as if it was to support her, “ do not speak to me so. I cannot bear it yet.” And then the bairn’s tone changed. She was feared to keep her thoughts upon that.

“ If I could only have changed places with Claud,” she said, in a half smiling, half thoughtful way. “ Happy Claud ! who can be independent always ; whereas, we poor girls — is it not strange, aunt ? Men are honoured in all ranks for labouring in an honest avocation, while women must reverse the saying

of the unjust steward, 'I cannot beg, and to work I am ashamed.' If I could only work ; or failing that, if I had only been Claud Maitland instead of Grace !"

"Truly, Grace," said I, "it's my fear that if you had been Claud Maitland of Oaken-shaw, you would never have come to Sunnyside."

"There is something in that," said Grace, in her blythe way, (for though she was ever uncommon quiet, it's no to be described the blytheness that was often in her eyes and in her converse). "And to be brought up among yon people, in yon place—that would have been miserable indeed ; so I am far better as I am. Aunt," and the bairn sprang to her feet as if she were inspired, "do you mind Mrs. Standright's old whisper that I was, or would be, an heiress ? Heiresses

are independent some time. Who knows? —we may make another Sunnyside at that unknown Oakenshaw!"

I was pleased that she should be comforted even by such a thought as that, and let her begin a discourse about it, for it was a small thing being grieved myself in comparison of seeing Grace so. But another thought struck her. "Aunt," she said, "could we not go to Pasturelands? I may not hear Mr. Maitland again, for a long time at least; and Mary—" Grace's voice shook. "Could we go over to-night, aunt. I should like to see them all before—before I leave home."

"But we have scarcely time, Grace," said I.

"We will get a gig from the Inn," said Grace, "and I can drive you, aunt. Mind, to-morrow will be my last Sabbath. Let us all be together to-morrow."

She knew well that I was not good at saying no to her, so Jenny was sent down immediately to the inn, to speak for a gig ; and no long after, it came up to the door, with Willie Lightfoot, the postman's son, a spirity little imp, that guided a horse as if he had been born on its back, driving it. But Grace could rule every thing, beast or body, that she lifted her bit white hand over, and within an hour we were away, our two selves on the road to Pasturelands, leaving poor Jenny behind us, filling the house with lamentations.

The hurry of the drive and the blythe look that Grace tried to put on, made it go out of my head sometimes for a minute, but I could not but notice that there was a striving for cheerfulness in the bairn's manner, that was not pleasant to behold, and a bitterness now and then mingling with her speech in an

unconscious way, that made me both fear and wonder.

It was gloaming when we reached the Manse, and the minister, and Mary my sister, and the bairn Mary, were sitting together, (the minister being done with his labour for the Sabbath) waiting for their tea ; and a great commotion there was among them, when they saw us coming up through the garden. So little Mary came running out to meet us ; but Grace did not smile or look cheerful then. It seemed to me as if it all forsook her, when we came within the shadow of the brown leaves about the Manse of Pasturelands, and whenever she had spoken a word to the father and the mother, (and truly the grief that was hanging about us, seemed to sadden the whole Manse, the moment we crossed the door-stone), she took

Mary away up the stair, and they were there together, I know not how long.

When they came down again, Mary's eyes were red, and the tears stealing out every now and then, and Grace had a calm and stedfast sorrowful look, which dwells in my mind to this day, like the look of one that was too great to lament and mourn, but just ruled herself in quietness. The two had been like sisters for the best part of their days; it was but according to nature that the parting of the young hearts should have a sore pang in it.

It was but a sad visit that, seeing we were both sorrowful ourselves, and made them so, for Grace was a bye-ordinary favourite with every body about the house. Truly to have seen the demeanour of my sister Mary, no stranger would have thought that one of the



two bairns that were clinging about her was not her own; and as for the minister, my brother, forbye the fatherly regard he had for Grace, just as one of the family; there was the kindly and affectionate feeling, which a master cannot but have for a thoughtful and considerate bairn, with an uncommon capacity for learning. It had long been a joke with Claud and Mary, that Grace was aye their father's favourite in the study, whoever he might make most of out of it.

I mind well the subdued sob that burst out from all in our pew on the Sabbath day, even to the very servant lasses, when the minister prayed for them that were in circumstances of trial, and for the stranger in the land. Doubtless we were all thinking where our dear bairn might be upon another Sabbath day. We stayed at the Manse till Tuesday, and then Mary came with us to

Sunnyside, to abide with Grace till she went away, and then to comfort me, though I know not but what the comforter had outwardly the most need of comfort.

The days slipped bye fast, and Thursday night came soon. We were sitting about the fire, the two young things and me, in the darkening, trying to speak in a cheerful manner, to keep one another's spirits up, and waiting for the strange serving woman, that was to be Grace's companion on the journey. Grace was speaking more than was her custom, and had a kind of gayness about her, that was not natural, but looked to me, just like a thin covering that she tried to pull out, and stretch over the pain that was below. She had been speaking about Oakenshaw.

"Mary," she said, "what think you of my designation, does it not give your ima-

gination full play? I have enthroned myself already lady and mistress of ever so many forest kings."

Mary was sitting very quiet and melancholy.

"I would rather see you below the old elm at Pasturelands, Grace," she said.

I could see that there was a quiver of Grace's lip not to be concealed, but she went on again.

"We shall have old elms at Oakenshaw, too, Mary, when we set up our court there. Aunt, I think we must have Sunnyside removed bodily; no other birds will ever sing like those which have just taken their departure from the cherry tree. We must have them all removed. Only wait till we are of age, Mary; no one shall separate us then."

The innocent bairns! How little they thought what would come to pass before

then. Mary shook her head. Truly a parting of three years was a dreary thing to look to.

“ Will nobody care for Oakenshaw ?” said Grace, “ aunt, must I go and seek Jenny’s sympathy ? Will nobody rejoice in the prospect of my home-coming ?”

“ Oh, Grace !” said Mary, “ it is so far away, and no one knows what may happen before then, or where we may be, or whether you will remember us.”

Grace put her hand on Mary’s mouth, and looked up to me.

“ Little Mary does not know her sister Grace, aunt,” she said: “ the Grace Maitland little Mary knows, is not the one whom aunt Margaret has trained. The children of Sunnyside do not forget.”

“ Mary,” said I, “ Grace will not forget us: nevertheless it’s my hope that she will

get friends in Edinburgh, who will like her as well as we do ; but, bairns, I would have you remember that there is One whom we are aye inclined to forget, but who never forgets us. Keep aye your minds upon Him, and then there will indeed come a day when nothing shall sunder us."

Grace was looking at me, but Mary's head was bowed down, and I heard the voice of her weeping.

"Aunt, aunt," whispered Grace, speaking so low that even Mary could not hear her, "when you go into His presence, carry me with you : remember the motherless stranger then, who has no friend out of Sunnyside."

I know not how I would have answered her, for I felt something rising in my throat like to choke me, but just at the moment there came a great noise at the door, and the

sound of a loud step in the passage, and a strange tongue communing with Jenny, and in a moment after, the parlour door opened with a fling; and in came a woman dressed like a lady, and looking as if we were all far below her, and the little parlour in Sunny-side was not fit to sit down in.

We all sat quiet, for she came in on us so suddenly, and our past converse had not been of a kind to incline us for meeting strangers, but the stranger was troubled with no blateness.

“Miss Maitland, I presume,” she said to me, walking up to the fire-side in a bold manner. “I have come at the request of Mrs. Lennox, ma’am, to take charge of a young lady, who has been at nurse with you, or something of that kind. Ah, how shocking it is travelling in that nasty coach. It does me good to see the fire.”

And before we could get a word said, she drew in a chair and sat down beside us: her, the forward, upsetting stranger-woman, putting herself into the gloaming communion of me and my two bairns!

Grace rose with the spark in her eye, though I myself was taken by surprise and knew not well what to do.

“Immense disadvantages, Ma’am, the country has, hasn’t it?” said our new visitor. “Oh, don’t you think so? Well, you village people have the oddest notions! I daresay you think now that this little box of yours is as good to live in as our house in Edinburgh; and Edinburgh is nothing to speak of, only a country town. Don’t let me disturb you, Miss. Oh, I’ll make myself quite at home, I assure you.”

Grace was smiling by this time, as she stood with her hand on the back of my chair,

looking at the woman. "There appears no doubt of that," said my Grace; "but in the first place, you will be so good as attend to me."

The strange woman had been taking off her boa and her other things; but now she turned about, looking cowed a little, for Grace's bit tongue had command in it. "Has Mrs. Lennox entrusted you with any letter, any credentials?"

"Oh no, Miss," said the stranger. "She wrote before to order the young lady home; that's enough, I suppose."

"It is possible the young lady may have a different opinion though," said my Grace; "but I suppose, aunt, we must receive this person as Mrs. Lennox's commissioner. Shall I bid Jenny bring her refreshments?"

"Surely, my dear," said I. "Mary, ring the bell;" which being done, and Jenny



having answered it, I said to her, "Jenny, you will get this—" (I knew not right what name to call her)—"this person what refreshment she may like best; and also you will get a fire lighted for us in the room upstairs; and, Mary, you and me will go there just now. Grace, my dear, when you have spoken to your aunt's messenger, we will look for you coming up too." So with that, Mary and me went away, and it was not long till Jenny had a cheering fire burning, and Grace had come up and taken her place again beside us. "Grace," said I when she came in, "what said she to you?"

"Not much, aunt," said Grace. "The lady who condescended to come for me at Mrs. Lennox's desire, was amazed a little at the prompt retreat you made. I daresay she neither expected her arms to be so successful,

nor feels very comfortable in being left mistress of the field ; but this further annoyance—how very much trouble I have brought upon you, aunt.”

“Whisht, Grace,” said I ; “that is no a way to speak to me, and this your last night at Sunnyside ; and now, my dear bairn, the time is drawing near hand, and it’s my desire to have serious converse with you before you go away.” But for all that I said that, I sat still, and spoke not a word. It was as if the speech had been taken from me when I needed it most, and so there was a season of silence.

“Truly, Grace,” said I, when I was able to speak to her, “I know not wherefore we should be so full of mourning and lamentation, when you are going into the midst of your own kin, and them great in the world, and no further away than

Edinburgh; but it's no aye easy to give a wherefore, and my heart assuredly is heavy and sore troubled within me; nevertheless, Grace, I see no cause why you should be greatly cast down in your spirit."

Grace lifted up her eyes, and looked at me in a steadfast manner, as if she would have reproved me; and Mary cried out,

"Oh, aunt! how could Grace be otherwise, and her going away?"

"My dear bairn," said I, "you must not heed what Mary says, seeing she is younger and scarce so wise as yourself; but though it would be a sore heart to me to think that you could forget us, yet for all that, it is a fair and a blythe road that is before you, and you are going to your own station in the world, and to your own kindred, the which, Grace, are blessings no to be held lightly."

Grace looked at me in a bewildered manner, but did not speak.

“You are wondering what my meaning is, Grace,” said I. “My dear, you have been a most biddable good bairn to me; but I am feared in my own mind that you have rebellious thoughts towards this lady, who is your nearest friend, and will be a most kind and tender one, I doubt not; and think you what an unseemly thing it would be that you should submit yourself to the like of me, and no to your own aunt and lawful guardian.”

Grace gave a kind of strange and sudden smile, and then she said, “Aunt, there are two people in the world nearly connected with me, one by blood, one by—I know not what, kindness, generosity, undeserved and unequalled affection. Shall I tell you such a story about them as I used to tell to Jenny and Mary long ago. There are

two scenes so clear and distinct. If I had been an artist, I could have let you see, instead of hear them.

“There was a time once, when I, a little solitary child, was taken to see the first of these two individuals. It was in a large room I remember, which I thought very grand and splendid, and there were other children in it besides me, and these were the lady’s own. Well, aunt, somebody had taken off my little cloak and bonnet, and I was led up to this lady, who was my aunt, they said; and after she had just looked at me, I was allowed to stray away into a dark corner, to think there by myself, and to look at the others and wonder why they should appear so happy, and I be so very much the reverse. Well, aunt, one of them came to me by and bye and began to laugh at my dress, and provoked

me to make some angry answer, and push her away, and then in came the lady whom they called my aunt; and then followed a ringing of bells and an angry exclamation, that ugly children were always ill-tempered, and that she could not bear my white face, and then I was pushed towards the nurse, who entered, and was carried away into solitude and darkness. Well, that is one picture, now I shall give you the other.

“ I, the same little solitary child, travelled a long journey with a stranger, on a summer day, and came at last to a little house with trees about it, where the other lady lived; and it was not in her drawing-room I saw her first—but out at the road-side, ready to take my hand and smile upon me—I had never been used to such sunshine, Mary, and I remember well how I rejoiced, and trembled, too, lest it should pass away—

and by and bye there came a time when she laid her hand upon my head and shed back my hair, and called me: "my dear bairn." These are my two pictures, and now, when I am no longer a child but a woman, I am to look upon these my two aunts alike."

"My dear," said I, "you are no drawing the right conclusion; you were but a bairn then, and might be in the wrong. You are drawing to womanly years now, and should lay these old fancies by."

The face of my bairn flushed red. "You think these things are childish, aunt," she said, "perhaps they are; but children, and, above all, neglected children, observe keenly. I feel quite sure my judgment of Mrs. Lennox is correct."

"Be sure of no such thing, Grace," said I, "though you were ever biddable

to me, yet, for all that, you had a spirit within you that was ill to subdue, and we're no aye the best judges ourselves: it might be you that was to blame. Do you mind the carter lad you lifted your hand to, the first day you were at Sunnyside? Maybe he thinks you were but a proud bairn, and himself no wrong."

"Oh, no, aunt," said Mary, "he does not. It was him that brought Grace her white rabbit that Claude lost in the Cleugh-head plantings. It was him that put down the stepping-stones for us over the burn at Sedgie Brae: Jamie Laidlaw would do anything for Grace."

"James Laidlaw is a well conditioned lad, Mary," said I, "but there are few that would have taken it in that way. Grace, I will have no ease in my mind till you promise me to try and forget this. If



you cannot meet the sister of your father in an affectionate manner, as you should do, meet her at least as a stranger that you have no ill-will at."

Grace put her hand into mine and said, "Aunt, I promise," and just at that time the clock in the kitchen struck nine, which was the hour for our evening exercise, so Grace rose up, and said she would tell Jenny, and went away down the stairs without saying another word; for it had ever been my wont when we were ready for the worship, to send Grace to tell Jenny, having a feeling within myself, that it was scarce right to summon one of the family by a bell to the presence of Him, who is no respecter of persons, and in whose eyes master and servant are alike. Mary roused herself, too, and drew my chair to the table, and set the rest ready.

"Aunt," she said, "will you sing the

twentieth Psalm. My father sang it the night before Claud went away, and it is often sung where there is to be a parting."

I said I would, and with that Grace came in, carrying the big Bible, and Jenny behind her, and the stranger woman, who looked as if she knew not whether to sneer or to be feared, for I could see that, in spite of all her boldness, she had a kind of dread of my bairn Grace. So we sat down to the exercise. Truly it was a pleasure to me to hear the two young voices joining in the psalm that Mary bade me sing,—

"Jehovah hear thee in the day,  
When trouble He doth send,  
And let the name of Jacob's God  
Thee from all ill defend."

But after we had read the Word, according to our wont, it was a hard thing for me

to put my supplication into words, and speak it so that the rest might join, for my heart was yearning over the dear bairn, the comfort of my loneliness, and it was ill to restrain within the bondage of speech ; but the Lord saw the desire. I had near fallen down again when I rose from my knees, for my strength was spent with that wrestling, but the two were girdling me with their arms, and I was strengthened.

So the night wore away, and we had much more converse. "And Grace," said I, long after that, when Jenny was away to her bed, and the house quiet, "I did not get all said to you before, that I wanted, concerning your aunt. Mind, you have promised to be a good bairn, to honour her and to obey her."

"Absolutely, aunt?" said Grace, with a

smile, as if she thought I was going too far.

“Absolutely, my dear,” said I, “in all that conscience and the Word does not forbid. But, Grace, you see I must put a bound even to that: your friends are dwelling in a gay world, and among much of what folk call pleasure. Truly, my dear bairn, it is but a snare and a delusion. You know well, both of you, that I never was a hindrance to any healthful and right blytheness; but, Grace, I am feared that you will be tempted to what will come between you and the duty that you owe to your Maker.”

“Aunt,” said Grace, “I do not pretend to unusual gravity; but, surely, abstaining from such frivolous gaieties as we read of, can call for very little self-denial from me.

I do not like them, aunt ; I could not enjoy them, if I would."

"There is no saying, Grace, my dear," said I, "you are but young : but what I have to ask of you is, that wherever you find the pleasures of this world, or any other such like thing, turning away your heart from Him that saved you, you will straight-way seek to turn from them. I know it is the wont of bairns of your years, who are come of high and great folk, to be often in the midst of a gay company till far on in the night, and I doubt not there may be a measure of pleasantness in it for a while ; but, Grace, when you come into the quietness of your own chamber, and take up your Bible, and try to have a right season of communion with Him that is our Master and our King, and find that you are no able to get it for evil and vain thoughts—

Oh, my dear bairn, be mindful of your best riches !”

“ Aunt,” said Grace, “ I will be mindful : but these are not the temptations, I think, that are most likely to beset me. I am going from *home* ; I am going to cold friends, who would not shed a tear if I were dead to-morrow, and you think I am likely to be drawn aside by vain follies like these.”

“ You are but young, Grace,” said I, “ and, woes me ! but the flesh is weak.”

“ And I am not so strong in the abstract *right* as I once was, aunt,” said Grace, with a sorrowful smile. “ No, that is one bad effect of the training of Sunnyside. Even my old Utopia of doing right, does not make up for losing all else.”

“ But that’s what you will not do, Grace,” said I ; “ and, bairns, I would have you take this as my last words, if I should never

speak to you both together again. The Almighty has not placed you in this world that you should strive after a measure of deceitful happiness, but that you should glorify his everlasting Name. If it pleases Him, you shall have your season of gladness and rejoicing, but you were not made to hunt and to seek after it, but to fulfil the will and manifest the glory of God that made you. Oh, bairns, bairns! wherever Providence may cast your lot—mind your chief end!”

There was a long silence after that, and the two sat on each side of me, with their hands clasped over my knee, and sometimes Grace, and sometimes Mary, would lift their eyes to me with such pitiful looks, that I could scarce keep myself up at all.

“But Grace will not feel so much a stranger, aunt,” said Mary, at last, “or

be so lonely in Edinburgh, while Claud is there.”

Grace caught at that, and there was some converse between them about it, though I myself said nothing, seeing it was not likely that Mrs. Lennox would be pleased with a poor minister's son visiting her niece, in especial as they were both young, and more might come of it than was bargained for—and then silence came upon us again. Truly, as the time wore on, my mouth was shut, and I could only look at the bairn in sorrow and in silentness.

“Aunt,” she said, when we had been sitting that way for a while, “I must add to all these things, what the poor queen did long ago, ‘a great patience,’ and so equipped I may go forth, may I not? even to fight with wild beasts at Ephesus; even to carry among these great Edinburgh folk, the light



of Sunnyside and Pasturelands, may I not, aunt?"

"It is time you were getting rest, my dear," said I. "Go to your beds, like good bairns, and forget not to seek the Lord before you sleep." So when I had bidden them good night, the two went away, and I sat down again by the darkening fire, and thought about them, and about the trial that was waiting for us in the morning. Truly a bitterness rose up within my heart, like to flood it, when I minded how soon I would have to part with my dear bairn, and what a weird lay before her, and then I was drawn in to marvel at the ways of Providence that parted her from me, to whom she was dear as my own spirit, and took her to the haughty and proud lady, who, if she was kin to her, was nothing more; but I comforted myself with the

thought that, though *we* may do things that have neither aim nor end, it's no to be disputed that the hand of Providence, when it is lifted, has ever a purpose in it, and "He doeth all things well!"

It was a cold, clear morning that Friday, that Grace went away, and Mary and me had so much to say to her (and yet there was so much more that we could not mind) that twelve o'clock came before we knew where we were; and at that hour the coach started.

"Oh, Miss Grace! Miss Grace!" cried out Jenny, throwing her arms about the dear bairn, when she was dressed for the journey, like as it was to keep her from crossing the door, "will ye gang and leave us, after a'?"

And, for myself, I can scarce say I was much better; and there stood Grace bidding

us farewell, and the tears falling from her e'en in silence, and herself like a firm young tree among waving breckans, tossed with the wind, but no overcome. And I have a memory after that of a crowd of women and weans about the road, and the honest face of James Laidlaw, the carter, looking after her, and the coach-door opened ; and then the crack of the whip and the sound of the wheels and horses' feet, and us turning round to see one another, dim, and downcast, and lonely—and our dear bairn away !

## CHAPTER V.

It was a sad house for that day, and for many a day more, though, doubtless, when custom had used us to the want of the bairn, we were brought into a greater measure of patience than at first. No that we forgot her, but far the contrary. I was whiles feared that she was more to me than it was right for one mortal to be to another. We thought of her, and we prayed for her, and we dreamed about her, and the burden of our speech one to another was aye, "Grace, Grace." We looked anxiously,

as may be thought, Mary, and Jenny, and me, for her first letter, and just the second morning after she left us, I saw from the window, (for we were all watching) Saunders Lightfoot standing under the ash tree, low down upon the brae, and the little imp, his son Willie, careering up towards Sunnyside with something in his hand. It was my Grace's letter, which the wild bairn had come up with, seeing he was swift of foot and a grand runner, while Saunders, his father, was but a pehgling slow body, and would have taken half-an-hour to climb the brae. So I broke the seal in a great hurry, and here is the letter:—

Edinburgh, 21st October.

“ My dear Aunt,

“ I have just finished my first survey of the new world on whose threshold I am

standing; its brilliant and cold externals, at least, from the magnificent river and country which I have been contemplating from my window, as enthusiastically almost as Fitz Eustace did, to the inmates of the drawing-room I have just left. Let me now proceed in proper order, however, in these my first impressions.

“The journey of yesterday was fatiguing, but had no annoyances peculiar to itself, only that the windows of the coach were almost superfluous things to me, and my own eyes the same. Mrs. Lennox’s maid behaved tolerably well, and I had the whole day to myself, to think over all that has been done and spoken at Sunnyside since my sentence of banishment was known, and behind my veil to indulge in a little quiet lamentation. It was late when we arrived in Edinburgh, and dark, and I only saw visions of passing

tall houses, and an inhospitable sky, till the coach stopped.

“ A carriage was in waiting for us, which we entered without delay, and I found, to my great astonishment, that my aunt’s maid became all at once very much more polite and attentive, which I accepted as a good omen. So, with gleams of light and tall shadows crossing us at every turn, we got at last to the house of Mrs. Lennox. How different from Sunnyside ! Footmen to let us in, to show us up the broad staircase, but not a smile to meet me, not one upon whom I had even the cold claim of kindred to welcome me to the great dreary grand house, which, nevertheless, they will compel me to call home.

“ ‘ Miss Maitland will have refreshments in her own room,’ said my guardian, delivering me up to another waiting gentlewoman, who

forthwith prepared to usher me to that sanctuary.

“ ‘But Mrs. Lennox,’ I said, in astonishment. ‘Has she been told?’

“ ‘Mrs. Lennox is engaged now, ma’am,’ said my fellow traveller, and will not fatigue you by waiting for her to-night, but to-morrow——’

“I turned away, and followed the other stranger, whom I find myself in the dignified position of calling “my maid” to my room, passing by the way a closed door from which came sounds of music and singing, and many voices, tokens, I suppose, of the engagement which prevented my kind relatives from taking any notice of me. We reached the room called mine at last, or rather the two, for the first we entered was a little dressing-room, the fireless grate and cold solitariness of which, brought to a climax the discom-



forts of the night. My guide, however, who is much younger and more prepossessing than the one who accompanied me from Sunnyside, called up another maid, who (albeit she did not do it in half so business-like a manner as our own Jenny,) made a fire for my comfort and consolation, and then I got a lonely cup of tea, and then was left to myself, my maid bidding me ring when I wanted her.

“I will not venture to say, aunt, that my thoughts over that fire were of a very pleasant kind, but I remembered your commands, and steadfastly kept myself from either blaming, or anticipating the conduct of Mrs. Lennox. I sat ‘meditating,’ to use your own favourite word, for a long time, I do not know how long, and then, in perfect forgetfulness of my new dignity, lay down without thinking of my maid, a circumstance which, I daresay,

will not be reported to my credit. This morning, however, I was encumbered and made awkward by her attendance, and being dressed as well as possible, proceeded to meet Mrs. Lennox.

“ She has been a very fine-looking woman, and has still a majestic presence, but cold, cold as the marble she was leaning on when I made my humble appearance before her. She received me politely, made some slight inquiry about my journey, and presented me to her daughters, who were in the room, as their cousin, Miss Maitland. The youngest is about my own age, the other a year or two older, and both are like their mother, exceedingly handsome, with fine regular features, and an air about them which made me shrink back, and feel myself far littler and humbler and more insignificant than ever I did before.

“The morning has passed off moderately well; my cousins, though troubling themselves little with me, have a good deal of conversation with one another, the whole tone and manner of which is so new to me, that I have had some interest in listening.

“And now, aunt, have you missed poor Grace? Has Jenny ever set my chair beside you, or Mary laid down a Bible, forgetting that I was gone? I hope it is so. How I shall endure this life, I cannot tell; but what will I do, dear aunt, if you do not remember me at Sunnyside? I comfort myself, however, with the thought that that is not very likely. When there are so few of us, there is less chance of one being forgotten. If the Bourtree children had been Maitlands instead of Elders, I would not have been nearly so confident.

“ This window, at which I am luxuriating, is almost worth suffering something for ; but the Firth and the sunshine are alike so cold in their brightness, that I am inclined to shiver while I admire. I am just about to make a paction with my maid, Jessie Gray by name, who seems a rather conversible and simple girl, that I may have the liberty of dressing myself ; and if Jessie should be shocked with my barbarous independence, I must just submit. Some time to-day I am to accompany my aunt out. If I could only see Claud !

“ Bid Mary write long letters, and write to me yourself, aunt, as much as you can, and regularly. And to my sister Mary, and Jenny, and everybody in the Manse of Pasturelands, give for me far more affection and kind wishes than a letter could carry, and tell them not to forget me ;

and remember me always yourself, dear aunt, as

“ Your most affectionate

“ GRACE MAITLAND.”

Truly, we were all greatly rejoiced at getting that first letter; not that there was much of a pleasant nature in it, but it was aye tidings; and the first words I heard, when we were done with it was Jenny crying out loud, “ Blessings on her ! to think o’ *her* minding how the like of me pat on a fire !”

So I bad Jenny go ben the house, and give the bairn Willie Lightfoot a jelly piece, seeing he well deserved it, having brought Grace’s letter so fast, the which Jenny was well pleased to do, for although he was an evil spirit of a bairn, it was wonderful how he was in favour with many douce folk.

And Mary and me had converse respecting the letter of our Grace.

Now I have before had occasion to say that Mary, my niece, being a bairn of a warm spirit, had a measure of jealousy respecting them (and truly, as Grace said, there were few of us) that were nearest to her, and liked not that any strange place should ever in any degree be likened to home. And I think not that Mary was greatly grieved that Grace was not like to think much of Edinburgh.

“Aunt,” she said to me, “how differently *we* would have welcomed Grace!”

“Doubtless, my dear,” said I, “it looked but a coldrife welcome—nevertheless, I have read in books that folk who are great in this world are wont to do so even with their best friends; and there might be a kindness in it also, as considering that our Grace was new come off a journey, and might be wearied and

no fit to see strangers : but, Mary, you should aye mind that there is a great odds of manners, and what might become us well enough, might, maybe, no be right with the like of Mrs. Lennox.”

A bit red glow came over the face of my niece Mary, but seeing she was a good bairn, for all the bit sparks of impatience that were within her, she abode quiet awhile till the prideful feeling was away, and then she said again in a serious way :—

“ But, aunt, if Grace is not happy in Edinburgh, she can surely come back to us ?”

“ I am in no manner clear in my own mind concerning that matter, Mary ” said I ; “ but we must just bide awhile and see. It’s my hope, that bye and bye she w ll be well content, seeing she is among her own kin.”

“ But I am sure she will not, aunt,” said Mary, with a burst that I was not looking for. “ Grace will never be content there—away from home, never, I am sure, I—I do not wish—”

“ Whisht, Mary,” said I: “ it is a grief to me to see the like of these ill thoughts in your head. Whether Grace ever comes back or no (and truly it is my hope she will) it is our part to seek that she *should* be content, and have a pleasant home to dwell in; so go away like a good bairn and write your letter to her; for doubtless, it will aye be a comfort to Grace to have kindly word from what has been home to her hitherto.”

So Mary wrote a letter to Grace which, being but the outflowing of one bit innocent heart into another, I was well enough pleased with. Also, I added something to it myself,



which, being only in the way of counsel and encouragement to my dear bairn, is hardly worth writing down again here, and so the letter was sent away. Truly, I comforted my heart concerning Grace, with a hope that her kindred would turn out better than she thought them, and would deal tenderly with her, even as a bairn of her spirit needed to be dealt with.

So the days passed on in a quiet manner, and upon the Wednesday, Mary, my sister, came down from the Manse to see us, bringing with her a letter from Claud, wherein the young man said that, though he was vexed for Grace having left Sunnyside, he was yet blythe that he would see her in Edinburgh. I had a drither within myself, when I heard that ; for the worldly estate of the two young things was like to be so different, and in all other ways—but truly

that was in the hand of Providence and no in ours. I saw also by Mary, my sister, though she spoke not much of it, that she also had a feeling like to mine; and, moreover, a fear which savoured of pride, lest any worldly-minded body should cast up that *her* son was wanting the favour of Grace, because she would be rich in houses and lands and such like, the perishable treasures of this world; for Mary was herself come of a good house, and had a right ambition that Claud Maitland should bring no discredit upon his godly forbears on either side. She did not abide long at Sunnyside, it being out of the question that both her and the bairn Mary, my niece, should be out of the Manse at the same time; but in consideration of my solitariness, it was settled between us that the bairn should stay with me for three or four days longer.

Upon the Friday after that, (which made out the first week from the departure of my Grace) we noticed from the window, Mary and me, that there was some stir in the town more than ordinary, (for commonly Burrowstoun is a most quiet place); whereupon the bairn, being in a meásure curious what it might be, as was but natural, went out to the gate to look down the brae. I also abode still at the window; no that I was heeding about the stir at the braefoot, for I have ever noticed that the Burrowstoun marvels are never more than just an opportunity for a moment's idleset, but because it was pleasant to look upon the young thing, my niece Mary, standing at the outer gate, with the thin sprinkling of red autumn leaves that were still on the branches, drooping above her head. But when I turned my eyes down for a moment,

I saw a gentleman riding up the brae, with little Willie Lightfoot running by the horse's feet as though he was guiding him, and up they came together, nigh to Sunnyside. When Mary saw that, she turned about, as was right, no to be looking at the stranger, and him a young man, when to my wonder, Willie Lightfoot lifted up his voice and cried, "Miss Mary! Miss Mary! here's a gentleman wantin the leddy," whereupon the young gentleman came off his horse, and followed Mary in.

I marvelled to see a look upon the bairn's face, as if she knew what the stranger's errand was, and truly when I looked upon the young man himself, coming in behind her, I could not but be taken with him at once, for he had an open and blythe face, such as it was just a pleasure to see—  
—forbye that I saw he was a thought

bashful, and had a flush upon his countenance, which was not to be wondered at, seeing Mary and me were both standing waiting for him to speak.

“My name is Elphinstone, ma’am,” said the young man, and then he cleared his throat and gave a glint at Mary, and grew redder in the face than ever. “I have a commission from my mother, whom you formerly knew, Miss Maitland—Mrs. Elphinstone of Lilliesleaf.”

I was brought to myself with that in a moment. Mrs. Elphinstone of Lilliesleaf was a lady who had been long away out of the countryside, having departed a new made widow, with one bairn, a while before my brother Claud was married, and I was blythe to hear of her return, and well pleased that she should mind me so well as to send her son ance errand to

see me, for we had been warm friends in the days of our youth. So I told the young gentleman I was glad to see him, and bade him sit down, and as he did it I saw that Mary had gotten her seam again, and was set down to it with such disappointment in her innocent face as made me marvel. "This will be but a strange land to you, Mr. Elphinstone," said I, when I had asked much for his mother, and had grown in a manner acquaint with him; "for you can mind little about even Lilliesleaf itself, seeing you had scarcely gotten to your own feet when you were taken away."

The young man gave a cheery smile. "I have certainly more command of my goings and comings now," he said; "but I am quite a stranger in my own country, Miss Maitland, almost in my own house, though the dark corners of Lilliesleaf are beginning

to grow familiar now, when I have been a whole fortnight at home; but it is not so in feeling, I assure you: I am a true Scotsman in spite of my German education."

"You have been in Germany then?" said I.

"Oh yes, for most of my life," said our new friend. "I suppose my mother chose Mannheim, originally for economical reasons: we Elphinstones of Lilliesleaf were not the richest people in the world then, you know," and the young man laughed in a frank and light-hearted way. "And of late my mother's health has failed greatly, and we have tried many places in a vain attempt to improve it," and with that a shadow fell upon the blythe young face again.

"It's my hope the air of home will do her some good, Mr. Elphinstone," said I, "for it is aye kindlier than a strange place."

“I am flattering myself that it will,” said Mr. Elphinstone, “and that reminds me of my errand to-day, Miss Maitland, which was to beg you to come and see my mother as soon as you have leisure. She is very lonely and very weak, and Lilliesleaf, you know, must have painful associations. I hope you will honour my deputyship so far as to let me say what day we may expect the pleasure of seeing you.”

I was startled with that, for I neither expected an invitation to Lilliesleaf, nor was in the custom of going out any way to visit, except to the Manse, or maybe once in two or three years to a gathering at Bourtree, so I knew not well how to answer him.

“To-morrow?” said the young man.

“No,” I said, “it would not be right so near the Sabbath-day.”



“Monday?” said Mr. Elphinstone.

I looked over to Mary, that she might give me counsel, and so did he.

“There will be word from Grace on Monday, aunt,” said Mary, in a tone that was wonderful ungracious for her.

“And so there will, my dear,” said I. “Monday would not do then.”

“Then we will fix Tuesday,” said the young man. “Nay, Miss Maitland, take my counsel this time, instead of the young lady’s—you will come on Tuesday. But I will not undertake to say when my mother will let you return.”

“But Grace’s letters, aunt,” said Mary, in a low voice, as if she was feared I would forget.

“Indeed, Mary,” said I, “that is just what I was thinking about.”

“Now I call that too bad, Miss Mary,” said young Mr. Elphinstone, rising up from his seat and going nearer her, as if he had known her all her days, “it is not generous of you to lift so potent a voice against me. Let me be your counsellor this once, Miss Maitland, and as for letters, I shall ride down myself for them, if you will only not disappoint my mother.”

So it ended with me promising I would go, and the carriage was to be sent for me, and as much work made about me, as if I had been the first lady in the land.

“My mother indulges in many speculations, Miss Maitland,” said Mr. Elphinstone, “regarding the changes which must have been wrought in the neighbourhood since she left it. Births, deaths, marryings, and

all these other interesting minutiae. I hear her mention your brother often—our minister in future, I believe.”

“My brother Claud is minister of the parish of Pasturelands,” said I, “as his father was before him. Your mother will mind him a young man, Mr. Elphinstone; but he has a son now, like what he was himself then, and this, my niece Mary, is his daughter.”

The young man had doubtless thought as much before, as I saw by the way he asked about the minister; but he rose up from his seat and bowed to her, the which politeness Mary only made answer to, by a little motion of her head. Truly I marvelled greatly within myself what could have stirred the bit evil and impatient spirit to get the better of the bairn. But young Mr. Elphinstone chanced to espy from the

window that the little spirit, Willie Light-foot, was causing his horse to gallop in an unchancy manner up and down the brae, whereupon the young gentleman departed from us, minding me that the carriage would be sent to Sunnyside for me on Tuesday.

“And Mary,” said I, when I was standing at the window, watching him turn along the high road to Pasturelands (for Lilliesleaf was in that parish), “what ailed you at the gallant young gentleman, that you took so little heed of him, and him so polite to you?”

Mary gave a glance up to me, as if she had a kind of perception that she was not in a right spirit.

“I wonder, aunt,” she said, in a quick way, “if Mr. Elphinstone thought an invitation to Lilliesleaf an honour to *you*.”

“Maybe other folk would, Mary,” said I, “whether he did or no; but truly I am feared I must be losing my own right vision, for I saw not anything like that in him. The frank, open-spirited young man! and was it your thought, Mary, that he had a haughty or prideful meaning towards us?”

Mary gave me no answer for a while, and then she said low and quiet, “I was so disappointed.”

“Disappointed, bairn?” said I, “and wherefore was you disappointed?”

The bit perturbation of the bairn’s spirit was floating away like mist. “It was very foolish, aunt,” said Mary to me, “only it just came into my head: I thought he was bringing some word from Grace. It was very unreasonable, but I was so much disappointed.”

“You are but a foolish bairn, Mary,” said I, “and if the young man had just been like yourself, in the way of worldly station, you might have hurt his feelings; and truly I will need to tell the minister if I see the like of that again.”

I had scarce got the words spoken, when Jenny came in with something in her hand, the which made Mary’s seam flee into the corner in little time. It was a letter from Grace. Two letters, I should say, for there was one to Mary besides mine, the which being written in a bantering way, as if the dear bairn was wanting to bring mirth even out of her troubles, I see little need for putting in here, for though it is my purpose to send forth this history into the world through the hands of them that make their bread by printing books, yet I think not it would be

right to publish the innocent communings of the two bairns—but this is Grace's letter to me:—

“ My dear Aunt,

“ I have just laid down your most kind letter, and while its charm remains strongest, begin my own, that you may see me in my sunniest hour. I do not care for misinterpretation here, but if you began to think me morose and ill-conditioned, what should I do ?

“ I shall obey your command most scrupulously and tell you everything. I have all confidence, dear aunt, that you will counsel me in my difficulties and correct me in my blunders. I can promise you already that there shall be abundance of both.

“ And now for my report. Sabbath morning rose coldly over us, most unlike the Sab-

baths of Sunnyside; with no household worship to welcome it, and nothing to show that it was hallowed. We went to Church, my aunt, my cousin Madeline and I—to the Episcopal Church I mean; for that I should have any religious opinions of my own would appear supremely ridiculous in their eyes. And after listening to the long ritual, (I would not like to speak disrespectfully of anything that Christian people hold in high estimation, but to me it did seem very wearisome and lifeless), we heard an exceedingly excellent and evangelical sermon, to which my aunt and cousin gave the most graceful and listless half attention, while I listened with all my might. Strangely different as the circumstances were, I could almost have fancied, sometimes, that Mr. Maitland himself was the speaker.

“ When the service concluded, and we



were returning home, I ventured to ask who the preacher was, but save the important piece of information that he was of a good family, could ascertain nothing about him. I could hardly venture, however, to find fault with that, remembering that even yourself had so great a remainder of Scottish prejudice, as to like people better for being 'well-born.'

“On Monday, I had the honour to accompany Mrs. Lennox to various shops; and, under her direction, made choice of a few articles of dress, very quiet and very plain, but of rich enough material, (see how faithful my record is). On the same evening, I had a conversation with, or rather was examined by, my aunt, on various points connected with my education. My cousin Harriet was seated at the piano, making her fingers spin over the keys, with a speed which astonished

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me, while I, albeit not very greatly delighted with the sweet sounds, stood looking vacantly on, in the painful weariness of having nothing to do. The thing came to a clattering conclusion at last, and my aunt spoke during the lull.

“ ‘ Harriet, does your cousin play ?’

“ Harriet turned her head half round, and looked astonished.

“ ‘ How should I know, Ma’am, I have never investigated the extent of my cousin’s accomplishments. Pray, Miss Maitland, do you play ?’

“ I answered, with a tremble, that I did a very little.

“ Harriet smiled, and her mother said, coldly : ‘ Be so good as to favour me, Miss Maitland, by letting me see how much.’

“ Harriet rose with mischievous haste, and I, like a hero, (only a very tremulous and

reluctant one) sat down to that abominable piano,—what I brought out of it I know not: I might have grown a very MacRimmon at that moment, if feeling had been all that was needful—but I was soon released. Harriet resumed her seat with an intelligent, half-mocking, half-compassionate glance, and Mrs. Lennox continued. ‘Ah, it is of little consequence: the natural taste is wanting, and that, of course, nothing can supply. Do you draw, Miss Maitland?’

“‘No, Madam,’ said I.

“‘And have no taste for that either, I presume,’ said Mrs. Lennox, drawing herself up. ‘You have a strange mind, young lady, for a Maitland; your father’s family have been always distinguished for their love of literature and art, but what can we expect, indeed, from the daughter of—’

“ Mrs. Lennox stopped, and then slightly modifying her tone resumed: ‘ I suppose it is unnecessary to ask if you are acquainted with any of the languages.’

“ You may imagine how I felt while undergoing this peremptory questioning, and how that last illusion ‘ the daughter of—’ made the full cup overflow ; but you have no idea, aunt, how meek I grow—so I answered: ‘ I have some little acquaintance with French, Madam, though I cannot vouch for having sufficient taste to master the language perfectly ; and of Latin I know more, having read a good deal with my kind friend, Mr. Maitland of Pasturelands.’

“ ‘ With whom ?’ said my aunt, and Harriet’s fingers stayed on the piano to listen. ‘ Mr. Maitland of where ?’

“ I repeated our good father’s name, and his

relationship to you, but dared not trust myself further, something not favourable to speech was swelling in my throat.

“ My aunt smiled.

“ ‘ So you are quite a learned lady, Miss Maitland, I find. Our poor accomplishments sink into insignificance before you. Such a pursuit as this for instance,’ and Mrs. Lennox laid her jewelled hand upon an embroidery frame, resplendent in rich colours, ‘ would be altogether too frivolous for you, I imagine.’

“ I am afraid I began to grow ill-natured.

“ ‘ You have already demonstrated, Madam,’ I said, ‘ that I have no taste. At Sunnyside such an accomplishment would have been useless to me—here, I would gladly attempt even that for an occupation.’

“ ‘ Oh,’ cried my aunt, ‘ your cousin is most gracious, Harriet—make your acknow-

ledgements. She would actually patronize our useless occupations.'

"I made no answer to that: Mrs. Lennox's address to me has a degree of mere mean spitefulness in it, which does not seem to suit with her real character, and which is best answered, I think, by silence; but Harriet looked round in her usual half patronizing, half contemptuous way, and came to my rescue. 'I shall show you my gratitude, cousin, by teaching you to be useless gracefully, if you can manage to have taste enough for that.'

"So, since that day, I have been entrusted with a piece of Harriet's embroidery, pricking my dull fingers over it in stupid tediousness. 'The daughter of ——.' Mrs. Lennox did not know how many old childish pains were set tingling by that word, nor how I begin to grope for the half remembered words of

my old nurse, and put them together. Did you ever hear anything, dear aunt, about my mother ?

“ So now I must come to the formula of conclusion, kind love *to everybody*. Pasturelands and Sunnyside consecrate all their vicinity to me ; but principally to all who bear our name, and dwell beneath the two roofs, on which I pray that all blessings may descend—and still more especially, my dear aunt, to yourself.

“ GRACE MAITLAND.”

Truly I marvelled within myself that a lady who had bairns of her own could find it in her heart to speak in such a manner to a young thing of a pleasant nature like my Grace. And I was also troubled with the thought, that it was ill done to bring her up just in the same quiet manner as the bairn

Mary, who was never like to be higher in this life than just maybe the estate of a plain single woman like myself, or a douce minister's wife, like her mother before her. But it was aye a comfort to me, that the bairn had wanted no needful thing, but just them that were in a manner bonny dies, and could be done without; for truly, she had read many books, and had much knowledge of divers things, besides having in herself a clear and well-conditioned spirit. Likewise concerning the folk in Edinburgh, I was troubled, and saw not how the bairn could dwell among them, seeing that they were fremd in heart, if they were kin in blood.

I could not see that Mary was in any uncommon manner vexed that Grace was not like to be great friends with her cousins; but she was filled with great indignation, (having, as I have already found it needful



to say, the spark of a hot and impatient spirit within her,) that any mortal should speak so to our Grace. So after we had communed much concerning the letters, she said to me: "Then you are sure to go to Lilliesleaf on Tuesday, aunt?"

"I think not that I can help myself, Mary," said I, "for yon young lad looks not like one that will stand resistance: so I will have to be a good bairn, and do what I am bidden. Also, doubtless, I have a desire to see Mrs. Elphinstone, who knew my youth, Mary, even as Grace knows yours."

Mary gave me a wondering look, as if she thought it was not possible. "Did you know her as well, aunt, as Grace and I know one another?"

"Maybe no quite, Mary," said I, "but nearhand it; and my life had more stir in it then, and less quiet. Truly, it is but

natural that I should like to see her ; yet there will be a measure of pain in it too."

"Then, aunt," said Mary," "you would grieve to part with her, as I did to part with Grace?"

"Ay, Mary," said I, "but I had other trials before, that made that look light. But marvel not so, Mary, my bairn ; they are all long past and forgotten, and you have your letters to write to Grace."

## CHAPTER VI.

UPON that same day (being, as I have before said, a Friday) my niece Mary wrote an answer to the two letters which Grace had sent to us. And it so happened, that when Mary went ben the house for a light to seal her letter by (seeing I caused her to go herself, not to be fashing Jenny, and her in the midst of her work) my eye fell upon a bit which she had hidden beneath the folding, for fear I should see it. I think not that the bairn knows to this day, that I saw that bit postscript of hers ; nevertheless, as Grace

writes about it in one of her letters, I will just put it down here, though it was touching my own self.

“Grace,” it said, “did you ever hear of my aunt having grief in her youth harder to bear than even our parting? You know we have heard hints of some story, which nobody would tell us plainly, and I never liked to ask my mother—something of sorrow and sacrifice on my aunt’s part, and sin in some other. I have often wondered about it. What makes me mention it just now is, that when my aunt was speaking of Mrs. Elphinstone, though she was pleased to meet her again, she said there would be pain in it, too. Do you think, Grace, that my aunt can ever have been very unhappy?”

Woes me! but it is a strangely formed thing, that tenderest part of us, that we call the heart; for even when folk get up into

years, and grow in a manner hardened to the adversities of the world, there are aye old stounds and byepast remembrances that strike up through it sorely, when no mortal eye can see. The innocent bairn ! I had entered into my tribulations by the time I was her age—soon begun, soon done ; and had I no reason to be thankful that Providence had ordained me so peaceful and content a life ? But there is ever the natural turn for re-pining that starts up whiles, whether folk will or no.

But Grace's letter was sent away, and Mary and me both began to make ourselves ready, her to go home, and me to go to Lilliesleaf. No that I had many preparations to make, except just putting in a new front breadth into my best black silk gown, and sewing on a hook or two that had come away, for I did not wear it often, seeing

it was a richer fabric than was needful for common use, and flowered. I had had the silk laid bye for a good while, but had never put it to its right use, because I did not need the gown; but being now like to wear it, I took the new breadth out of the drawer, and soon had it done. So by the Saturday at e'en, I had all my bits of odd things finished, that I might have no such worldly and vain matters in my head upon the Sabbath day.

Early on the Monday morning, having occasion to look out at the window, I was greatly surprised to see young Mr. Elphinstone coming up the brae, and before I had gotten over my surprise, I heard him in blythe converse with Jenny at the door. So straightway he was beside us.

“Miss Maitland,” he said to me, after we had shaken hands with him, “I must suppli-

cate you to let me have the *entrée* to Sunnyside. I am growing so wild in my new freedom among these moors and woods, that I shall certainly go astray if you do not extend your hospitality to me. Lilliesleaf, you know, loses its magnetic power when I come as far over as Burrowstown. Two points of attraction will enable me to steer better. I shall always have one in my eye."

"I will aye be very glad to see you, Mr. Elphinstone," said I; "but doubtless you will soon find folk in the countryside more meet for company to you than an old wife like me," for I had a kind of wonderment at the way the young man spoke, seeing that folk in our douce country are not wont to be so intimate with strangers just at once.

"You are looking grave though, Miss

Maitland," said young Mr. Elphinstone. "You are not quite sure about me, I see, but I have a very legitimate errand to-day. I ought to have brought my introductory note with me the first time I invaded Sunnyside, and my conscience would not excuse me for its non-deliverance—here it is—and if I come down upon you afterwards at all kinds of unlikely times, you will forgive me, will you not, for my mother's sake?"

And with that, he brought out a little note and gave it to me, and looked into my face with a half mirthful, half pleading eye—the which made me that I could not but smile at him. So he went away smiling too, and stood at the window where Mary was sitting, leaving me to read my note; but as there was nothing of a particular nature in it, but only two or three kindly



words, and something about her son, Allan, and a word at the end, minding me to be sure and come on Tuesday, I could hear well enough what the two were saying to one another.

“How these children gape!” said young Lilliesleaf; “curiosity looks the same all the world over. Were you ever in London, Miss Mary?”

“No,” said Mary, with a marvelling look; and well might the bairn wonder; she had never been above thirty miles from home, all her days.

“In Edinburgh, then?” said Mr. Elphinstone.

“No,” said Mary.

“What! never in a town at all,” said the young man. “Then Pasturelands must have a large share of your affections. I was there yesterday, hearing, and to my great pleasure,

making acquaintance with Mr. Maitland. Does your mother not grudge your residence at Sunnyside, Miss Mary?"

"Oh! it is only for so short a time," said Mary. "I do not live at Sunnyside."

"You don't? Oh!" said young Mr. Elphinstone, leaning his head upon the window, and looking disappointed, though wherefore I could not tell. "I have been greatly mistaken—I am sorry—"

And with that he stopped, as if he thought he was going too far, and truly it seemed to me as if Mary thought so too, for there came a cloud upon her face.

"I see you think I am growing impertinent," he said again. "Nay, I dare say you are perfectly right, Miss Mary; but I must crave your forbearance. I am sure no one could possibly have less purpose of offending than I."

Mary gave a smile. "You must think I am very easily offended, Mr. Elphinstone," she said.

"Well, we shall drop that, with your permission, Miss Mary," said the young man, in his blythe way, "and resume our original subject. I suppose you have not much curiosity as to the great world that fumes and frets outside this quiet hermitage of yours—not the very least, Miss Mary?"

"Oh! yes," said Mary, "I should like to see Edinburgh exceedingly. We do not want curiosity, though we are very quiet here; but Edinburgh has other attractions for us besides that."

"Your brother is there?" said Mr. Elphinstone.

"Yes," said Mary, "and more than my brother. Claud will come home by and bye; but Grace, poor Grace—but I forgot

that you never saw Grace, Mr. Elphinstone.”

“Your sister?” said young Lilliesleaf.

“No,” said Mary, “but my dear friend and companion. If she had only been my sister! but now—poor Grace!” and the bairn stopped with a tremble in her voice.

“Miss Mary,” said young Elphinstone, bending down to her, and speaking low, “I believe I had better go away. I have hit upon a subject which distresses you now. I am most unfortunate. I suppose I had better go.”

But go Mr. Elphinstone did not, but stood still there, looking at Mary, and as grieved like as if the trouble, the very nature of which he knew not, was his own.

Mary looked up to him again with a smile.

“I need not be so very much grieved

either," she said, "for Grace will come back, I hope; but we have been together nearly all our lives, and it was very hard to part with her. Do you know, Mr. Elphinstone, when you came on Friday, I felt quite sure that you had come with some word from Grace."

"So I began by disappointing you," said young Mr. Elphinstone. "No wonder I have gone on blundering since. Where is your friend, Miss Mary? Shall I set off and bring you a letter to redeem myself?"

Mary gave a laugh at that. "Oh, Grace is in Edinburgh," she said, "far away; a day's journey. Aunt," and she turned about to me, "Mr. Elphinstone is speaking of Grace."

"So I hear, my dear," said I; "and truly, I would not wonder if Mr. Elphinstone chanced to meet with Grace sooner than we are like to do. It may be that her aunt's

family are known to you already, Mr. Elphinstone.”

“What is the name?” said the young man.

“The name of my dear bairn is Grace Maitland,” said I; “but the name of her aunt is Lennox, and they are both, as I hear, of high station in the world. I have an anxiety to ask Mrs. Elphinstone about them, for I mind that, in our young days, your mother was much about Edinburgh, Mr. Elphinstone.”

The young lad gave a blythe and kindly smile.

“And these young days, Miss Maitland,” he said, “your presence will almost bring back to my mother. To feel herself in her old home, and to see her old friends, is a most rare and delightful luxury to her; and even I, colt as Miss Mary thinks me, am

beginning to acknowledge to the full the advantages of an hereditary dwelling-place. I assure you it is a great comfort to feel, that whatever may be one's own defects, these good folk about Lilliesleaf owe a certain degree of friendship and kindness to the name. Miss Maitland! I beg you to notice the mischief which lurks in this young lady's smile. Is it my humility or my philosophy that you laugh at, Miss Mary?"

"Whisht, Mr. Elphinstone," said I; "if you take tent of the changes of a bairn's countenance, truly your hands will be kept full of work; but it's my hope you will like Lilliesleaf for its own sake, as well as because it has been the house of your fathers for many generations."

"I have no doubt I shall," said the young gentleman, keeping aye a kind of watchful and smiling glance upon Mary. "I assure

you I intend settling into the best-behaved country gentleman within twenty miles of Burrowstoun."

"It is a very wise resolution," said Mary.

"And so it is, Mr. Elphinstone," said I; "and folk of that kind are sorely wanted in the countryside."

The young gentleman laughed at me taking his mirthful word in a grave manner, and so the converse went on, himself fleeing from one thing to another, whiles telling us about the far-away places he had been in, and whiles what it was his intent to do, now that he had gotten home. Truly, he seemed to me a young man of a most kindly and pleasant spirit, with much knowledge of divers kinds, and a light and mirthful heart, that had never yet come within the shadow of this world's tribulations. Also, it was



easy to see, by a word here and there, how careful and anxious he was about the delicate and invalid lady, his mother, at which I rejoiced in my own mind, for she had had her own share of trials.

I thought the young gentleman was never going away, and truly he lingered till I was wearied, and when he did go, he told me he would come himself with the carriage for me upon the next day, which was doubtless very kind of him.

“What a time he has been,” said I, when he was at last fairly out of the house. “I thought we were never to get him away.”

“Has he been so long, aunt?” said Mary, with a marvelling look. “Three o’clock! I did not think it was two yet.”

“You had not been taking count of the time, Mary,” said I, and indeed I thought it little wonder that the bairn should have found

it pleasant to have converse with one that was of years and spirit like herself.

Upon the next morning, before it was far on, we heard the blythe chirrup of Robbie Telfer, who was the boy at the Manse, and the pony's feet clattering on the gravel (for my brother Claud kepted a gig), and after the boy had gotten a piece, and the pony some provender, Mary and me parted, and she went away to her own home.

Truly I had a sore heaviness at my heart, when the bairn departed, although I myself was going away the same day, for the house had never looked so lone and desolate before, and being left for a while to myself, it was but natural that I should fall into a meditation concerning my bairn, Grace. It was a sore trial, for a young thing of a kindly nature to be placed so in the midst of a cold household of strangers; and I was like

to fall into a disposition of carping and discontent, considering within my own mind how much better my Grace would have been, if the will of Providence had set her, as a bairn of the Manse, like Mary. But then I reflected, that I knew not what Mary's weird might be, and that it was ill the part of the like of me, to take upon myself to judge of the ways of Providence, seeing that His hand mingled every cup in something of the same proportion, whether the bitter drop was seen by mortal vision or no, and as I knew by my own lot, it was whiles bitterest that was secret.

But I abode in a sore swither and perplexity respecting my bairn, for the way was clouded and tangled, and I knew not how to counsel her. Nevertheless, I had a hope, that when her own father was near-hand her, the ill things would pass away,

and my Grace would have a measure of pleasantness, seeing she was young and of an unburdened spirit. So while I was still in the midst of such meditation, Jenny came in to let me see how she had put up change of raiment.

“And when do you expect the young gentleman, Miss Marget?” said Jenny to me. “The twa times he’s been here already, the hail toun’s made a crack o’t, and Jean Wylie threeps it was Miss Mary that brocht him back sae sune. Atweel, and I wadna tak’ my ain aith neither—but that’s neither here nor there.”

“But, indeed, it is, Jenny,” said I. “It’s foolish folk, like you and Jean Wylie, that cannot see two young things together, but you must be thinking there’s something out of the ordinary in it, that puts such notions in the bairn’s heads. Never let

me hear you minting such a word to Mary. The young gentleman came on his mother's lawful errands."

"Deed, and ye needna be feared for me, Miss Marget," said Jenny. "The young gentleman, be thankit, has a good tongue o' his ane, as weel as a blythe face, and needsna the like o' me to speak for him; but if Miss Mary doesna find it out for herself—weel, weel, its na business o' mine.

"Jenny," said I, "you will mind that I will be greatly angered if I hear you so much as evening the two to one another again. Young Mr. Elphinstone and Mary have seen each other but twice, and nothing but ill and dispeace could come of the like of that nonsense between them."

"I had na will to anger ye, Miss Marget," said Jenny. "Atweel, and I kenna, far or near, gentle or simple, whaur the

young laird could get the like o' Miss Mary, noo that Miss Grace is awa; and for bonnieness, it's no to be denied that Miss Mary aye bare the gree."

"Whisht, whisht!" said I, "you are but a haverel, Jenny, when we come to speak about young folk. Let the bairns be bairns still, poor innocent things, their troubles will come soon enough, without us helping them on."

Jenny gave her head a turn, as if she thought I needed not be so hard on her.

"It wad ill set me to help bring trouble on ony o' the bairns, Miss Marget; but I see na watna awfu' faut there is in scorning her with the like o' young Mr. Elphinstone, wha is as gallant a looking lad as ane could wish to see, wi gowd in gowpins, I doubtna, and the haill yestate o' Lilliesleaf (let alane Lochlee, that is his mother's),

to come an gang on. Deed, sae far as I can see, Miss Mary wad be a hantle better, the Leddy o' a grand house like Lilliesleaf near-hand her ain mither nest, than awa in some driech Manse in the North country or the West country, where ane couldna get to see her without perils by the land, and perils by the sea."

It has long been a matter of experience that when Jenny and me are in an argument, it is aye her that has the best of it, so I laughed and said I, "Truly, Jenny, you have small consideration: did it never strike you that the bairn might be even like myself, and never get the offer of either Manse or braw house?"

"Lo! if there is na a grand carriage turning round in the road, shining in the sun as ane reads in story-books," cried out Jenny. "And there's the young Laird him-

self, Miss Marget. Blessins on his bonnie face ! he as like Miss Mary as gif he had been her brother, and abody kens what's signified in that." So Jenny hurried away to let the young gentleman in.

"Well, Miss Maitland," he said to me, "are you ready to come with me—" and as he said that, his eyes travelled round and round the room as if he wanted something pleasanter to look upon than me, for all that the wily callant was pretending (and, doubtless, with a measure of sincerity also, for he was of a kindly nature) to pay me so much attention. So I went away up the stair to put on my bonnet, and when I came down again, my young gallant was leaning upon the back of a chair with a book in his hands ; and truly I marvelled to see the start he gave, when I opened the door.

"Oh ! is it you, Miss Maitland ?" he said,



putting down the book upon the table. "I suppose we may go then," but for all that he did not stir, but stood with his back to the window looking at the door.

"My mother expects us soon," he said again, "and—I hope Miss Mary is quite well this morning."

"I thank you, Mr. Elphinstone," said I. "The bairn is quite well, but she will be home by this time, I am thinking, for they sent the gig for her early."

The young man gave a kind of little low exclamation, I heard not what, but it seemed that this satisfied him (though truly I see not what he had to do with at all) : so he said again : " Shall we go then ?" and straight-way we went.

It is not to be denied that young Lilliesleaf had an uncommon gift of speech, never-

theless, I remember not much of our converse at that time, seeing my thoughts were much taken up with the lady I was going to see. I minded of her first, as she was in her youth, dwelling with her mother in the old house of Lochlee, and how I thought there was not the like of her in the world. She was, maybe, five or six years older than me, a time which looked long in our young days, but made little odds when we were both well on in years; and then I minded of her marrying wild Malcolm Elphinstone of Lilliesleaf, and being but a distressed-like wife, for he was a gay man and no to be trusted, and it was said in the countryside that the old lady, Mrs. Græme, of Lochlee, was sorely against the marriage. And then (the last time I saw Susan Græme) I minded of her a pale young widow, with her deep mourning

weeds, and her one bairn; and truly my spirit was stirred within me with the memories of these old days, when I also was in my tribulations.

Nevertheless, though my mind was filled with these meditations, I was in a manner constrained to tell the young man the history of my bairn, Grace, and also to answer his questions respecting my nephew, Claud, and all the family at the Manse; for to be a young man of good parts, and divers kinds of learning, it was just wonderful how young Mr. Elphinstone was possessed with the spirit of curiosity, in an especial manner respecting the quiet affairs of a douce family like ours. So, in due time, we came to Lilliesleaf, and Mr. Elphinstone himself guided me to where his mother was. It was a room I had been in often, and truly when I saw all the old things standing as they had been three-and-

twenty years before, I had a feeling as if the time had slipped back, and she, herself, would be even the same as she was then. But woe me, there was a wonderful change !

She was lying upon a sofa, a thin, wasted, aged woman, with the hair upon her forehead as white as the driven snow. I knew I myself was beginning to be bowed with years, but I thought not to find her burdened so, and I stood there at the door, looking upon her, like one that had lost the use of speech. But Mrs. Elphinstone raised herself up joyful-like, and held out her hand and said how glad she was to see me, and then she looked at me even as I had looked at her.

“Time tells on us both,” she said ; “but Margaret Maitland bears her years better than Susan Græme.”

“Years, mother !” cried out young Mr.

Elphinstone, sorting the pillow at his mother's shoulder, in a kindly manner, that it just did me good to see. "You are bold to speak of years to Miss Maitland. I know few young ladies that have so light a step, and you shall emulate it by and bye, I hope, when the air of Lilliesleaf has had time to work."

The pale, thin, invalid lady, that I could hardly think yet was bonnie Susan Græme, shook her head. "No, Allan, that will never be, I am afraid; however, we will do what we can—and see now, you have kept Miss Maitland standing all this time. Ring the bell, Allan, and attend to our friend."

Mr. Allan had got me the softest chair in all the room, before she was done speaking, and then Mrs. Elphinstone's own woman came and took away my bonnet and shawl, no to trouble me leaving the

room. And after that, Mr. Allan wheeled in my chair beside his mother's, and we began to have converse about old things.

"And your brother is married, Miss Maitland?" said Mrs. Elphinstone.

Mr. Allan laughed out at that.

"I should think he was," he said. "Why, mother, Miss Maitland has a nephew whose popularity in the parish I am afraid I shall never equal."

"That is no reason for you interrupting Miss Maitland, Allan," said his mother, shaking her head at him, and smiling, "and do not let her see at the very beginning of your acquaintance, how obstreperous you are. But was it not one of the Elders of Bourtree Mr. Claud married, Miss Maitland?"

"Yes," said I, "it was Mary—you will mind Mary, Mrs. Elphinstone?"

“ I do, indeed !” said Mrs. Elphinstone, raising herself a little, and seeming to me to grow more youthful-like—“ that will do, Allan, never mind the pillow—Mary Elder was a sweet girl !”

“ So is her daughter,” said Mr. Allan, very low, so that his mother did not hear.

“ And Allan tells me you have a niece too, Miss Margaret,” said Mrs. Elphinstone ; “ I wish you had brought her with you ; but perhaps if the Lilliesleaf air does all that Allan promises in its name, I may try if I cannot drive to the Manse and see my old friends—or, perhaps, Allan, you may wile them down to see me, before that distant good shall have arrived. Ay, Margaret, you may sigh. Time has changed with us, since you and I stood at the gate of the old school-house, within sight

of your home, and laughed at the conversation going on between gay Harry Monteith and simple Reuben Reid—do you remember?”

Did I remember!—well, well—but that was a strange question to ask me!



## CHAPTER VII.

THERE was whiles some pain to me in the questions Mrs. Elphinstone asked ; doubtless she had been long away, and knew not the turn divers things had taken, nor how the naming of a name could cause a sore stound ; but, for all that, there was a measure of pleasantness in that first night. It was also a relief, when I did show a hesitation, that she was content to let it pass, and did not, like some dull folk I have seen, need to have it all summered and wintered to her.

It was not to be expected, even though we had many bye-past things to speak about, that I could be so long in the company of anybody, far less an old friend like Mrs. Elphinstone, without speaking of my bairn, Grace; but as she had lived all her widowhood in foreign lands, she did not know about Grace's aunt, and, indeed, I hardly expected she would.

"There was a Maitland," she said, to me, "whom I remember seeing the first summer of my married life, a cadet of a good family, proud, dashing, and penniless, and a fortune-hunter moreover. I heard afterwards that he had married a Miss Hunter, of — I forget the name of the place; but she was an heiress, rather inferior to him in rank, and in every other way very much above him. According to the established wont in such cases, the

handsome, dashing husband broke the poor wife's heart—at least got the credit of doing so. I recollect her perfectly. She was quite a girl when I saw her, with a very thoughtful and pale face, and fine eyes. Poor thing ! she did not live long."

"Indeed, Mrs. Elphinstone," said I, "if you had been describing my dear bairn herself, you could not have done it in better words ; but my Grace's eyes are like floods — I never saw the like of them."

"She might have a daughter," said Mrs. Elphinstone. "I have an idea that Miss Hunter's name was Grace, too, but it is so long ago. What did you say about an aunt?"

"My bairn is dwelling at this time with her aunt," said I, "a high lady, in Edin-

burgh, whose name is Mrs. Lennox. I would like well to hear about her from some other hand, for Grace is yearning for her old home, and maybe does not judge right, being but a young thing yet."

"Lennox," said Mrs. Elphinstone, with a considering look. "I do not recollect the name. Maitland had a haughty sister, I recollect, who married somebody. Really, Miss Maitland, I think it is very likely that your ward is a daughter of my old acquaintance, Miss Hunter. If I could only remember the name of her place."

"Was it Oakenshaw, think you?" said I.

"Oakenshaw. Perhaps that may be it," said Mrs. Elphinstone. "Oakenshaw—yes, to be sure, that is it. So that is proof positive. I am sorry you could not have

delayed her departure for a week longer, Miss Maitland. I should have liked much to see my old friend's child."

"Miss Maitland and you are most ingenious reasoners, mother," said Mr. Allan, who had been sitting by the fireside in a meditative way, taking no heed of our converse, as I thought; "Miss Maitland's ward is a Maitland, and will perhaps have an estate; you knew a Maitland who married an heiress, *ergo*, the young lady is the daughter of your friend — most ingenious; our old friend the Professor, System-Gebälk, could hardly have done better."

"We will not make you the judge, Allan," said his mother, smiling, "however superior your logic might be. I have a very confident persuasion that we are right, Miss Maitland, and that your ward is indeed Miss Hunter's child."

“And so have I,” said I, “and a dear bairn she is, Mrs. Elphinstone ; it grieves me that you have not seen her. Even my own nearest kin, my brother’s bairns, are scarcely as dear to me as Grace.”

Mr. Allan gave me a look with that, as if he would have said something in his laughing, saucy way, but then he seemed to mind himself, and so turned about to his mother.

“Is it your will, madam, that I should make an invasion to-morrow of the peaceful domain of Pasturelands, take the Manse by storm, and beg of our good minister and Mrs. Maitland to honour Lilliesleaf with a visit.”

“Do, Allan,” said Mrs. Elphinstone. “I am five years younger to-night with the company of my old friend,” and she looked with a pleased-like face to me—“but you

hope to have your own share of benefit from the invasion of Pasturelands Manse, I suppose."

Mr. Allan turned his face round to me, and there was the red mounting higher and higher up, till it was at his hair.

"Oh, I should like—like exceedingly to know—Mr. Maitland," he got out, with some stammering.

Truly it was out of my power to think what the lad could mean.

"And Mr. Maitland's son," said his mother. "Confess now, Allan, that it is the prospective acquaintance of the young gentleman that quickens your zeal."

The red ran down, and settled naturally in the young man's cheeks.

"Oh, I confess," he said, looking at his mother like a bairn that had eesaped the tawse, "I have a particular interest in Mr.

Claud, and regret his absence exceedingly. Does he fish, Miss Maitland? or shoot? or which of all these rustic and manly amusements is it, that Mr. Claud does especially patronize? Tell me, that I may be prepared for him."

"Bless me, Mr. Allan," said I, "the youth, my nephew Claud, is a divinity student in his last year, and if he's spared for another twelvemonth, it's my hope to see him a licentiate of the kirk, preaching the Word. Fishing and hunting, and the like, are no for him."

Mr. Allan gave a kind of shame-faced look at me, but for all that he smiled.

"Angling, surely, is not unclerical, Miss Maitland," he said, "that most patient and contemplative of all pursuits. However, Mr. Claud Maitland and I will surely be able to fall upon something in which we shall



have entire fellowship. You will not warn him to avoid me as a dangerous companion, Miss Maitland? nor frown upon our intimacy that is to be?"

"No, truly, Mr. Allan," said I, "I think not that I am given to setting my face against right pleasantness."

Mr. Allan smiled, and seeing he had some orders to give to his folk, it was not long till he went his way out of the room.

"Do you think I have spoiled my son, Miss Maitland?" said his mother to me, as we both looked after him. "My Allan has been everything to me, nurse and companion, pupil and friend. Mine would have been a dreary life, if Allan had not been just what he is."

"I doubt it not," said I, "seeing I myself know what it is to watch the upgrowing of pleasant bairns. It's my hope that Mr.

Allan will grow to be a pillar of strength in the house of his fathers.”

Mrs. Elphinstone raised herself upon her chair and drew near to me, and then she turned up what I may call an old past leaf out of her history and mine, which, being private and particular to ourselves, it needs not to mention here.

I said a word, that night, to Mr. Allan respecting Grace's letter, which was very like to come upon the next day; so early in the morning he had a man and horse sent to Sunnyside, with no other errand than to get it, which was very kind of him. So when the man came back, there was a letter from my bairn, which I will just put in.—

“My dear Aunt.

“Mary tells me you are away to Lillies-

leaf; nevertheless, as I think you are not likely to stay long from home, I will still send my report to Sunnyside. The said report has one incident in it this time, which may make it the more worth sending, and that incident is the long expected visit of Claud.

“The day after I wrote last, I happened to be entrusted with some message to my aunt, who, during the morning, enshrines herself in a grim library, where hangs a portrait of her dead husband, and sundry of his fathers, and which is consecrated by her to business and letter-writing.

“This library is on the ground-floor, and opens into what, in little houses, we would call the lobby, and in great houses, the hall. I had just got my errand done and shut the library door, when I heard the sound of my own name, repeated in the saucy

footman's sauciest voice to some one at the outer door: "Miss Maitland is not at home." The person without made some inquiry, I did not hear what, and the falsehood was repeated. I immediately went forward and contradicted it, and Claud was admitted, to the great amazement apparently of the saucy footman, who did not, however, dare to disobey me. So Claud and I went into the first room we came to—a little *waiting* parlour, for humble visitors—and were in the middle of a most interesting conversation about ourselves and you, when in upon us, armed with her most severe brow and most frigid stateliness, came my terrible aunt.

"She looked at Claud, and then she looked at me, and we not knowing what to do, rose both of us and looked at her.

"'I was not aware, Miss Maitland,' she

said, 'that you had any friends in Edinburgh.'

"I said, as calmly as I could, that I had none but Claud, and told her who he was.

" 'Mr. Claud Maitland is aware, I presume,' said Mrs. Lennox, 'that your father and myself have seen it necessary to remove you from the charge, or guardianship, as you are pleased to call it, of his relative.'

"I bowed, not daring to trust my voice.

" 'My own daughters,' Mrs. Lennox continued, 'are not wont to receive visits from gentlemen without my express sanction. I cannot for a moment think of permitting you, whose demeanour I can scarcely say is regulated by the same high sense

of delicacy and propriety as theirs, to do so.'

"You may think, aunt, whether this was easily borne or no. But I did not want to prolong these disagreeables for Claud: so I bade him go away, and when we had shaken hands, he obeyed me. Perhaps, we may never see each other again; but my aunt was watching me, so I put force on myself and was calm.

" 'Miss Maitland,' said Mrs. Lennox, when Claud was fairly gone, 'I am sorry for my own sake to be compelled to say that I have seen few young ladies who had so little sense of delicacy or decorum.'

" 'You have told me that before, madam,' I said.

" 'And, therefore, I presume,' said Mrs. Lennox, 'you do not think it necessary that

I should tell you again. You are mistaken, Miss Maitland: you seem to have entirely misapprehended the person whom you have to deal with. Depend upon it, no romantic pretences shall impose upon me.'

" 'You have no right, madam,' I said, 'to imagine for a moment that I or my friend should have the remotest intention of imposing upon you, and I would very fain know what purpose is to be served by restraining me thus.'

" Mrs. Lennox changed colour, with rage, I suppose.

" 'Go to your room, Miss Maitland,' she said, 'I am not accustomed to such altercations as this. Go to your room, young lady, and study, if it be possible, to acquire something more of feminine feeling and deportment.' "

" Aunt, am I unfeminine? It seems to

me that you should be as clear-sighted as Mrs. Lennox; and such an imputation is very hard to bear. In those gentle rebukes of yours, dear aunt, which followed my misdemeanours of old, I remember the word, 'unwomanly,' but it was used as a bugbear, rather than a reproach; a fearful thing to be avoided, and not an error committed. Am I unwomanly, after all?

“On Sabbath morning, finding that Mrs. Lennox and her daughter gave no sign of going to church, I got Jessie to go with me, and went out without asking leave, thinking it better to go without my aunt's permission than against her will; and the walk to church was so exhilarating, that I almost forgot my troubles. There were so many people in the streets—so many groups of families, brothers and sisters belonging to one another, belonging to the grave mothers and



fathers at their head, while poor I belonged to nobody, that I was both saddened and comforted, saddened for my present self, comforted with the thought of home. These grave cheerful church-going people—I wonder how I resisted my inclination to speak to some of them, they were all so like friends.

“I got Jessie to guide me to Dr. C’s church, partly for his own fame, and partly because he was Mr. Maitland’s friend. The great Doctor is a little thin, small man, with that look of melancholy, and almost pain, in his face, which you see often in those who are deformed; deformed, however, he is not, and before long, one could see that these nervous arms, tugging at the cushion, with the velvet clutched in their thin long fingers, were the arms of a giant. There was something grand, too, in seeing the one mind swell-

ing within its slight physical covering (for I never saw a man with whom the idea of being merely *clothed* with a body, could be so easily realized), and reigning over all around it.

“ When the service was over, and we were going away, we encountered in the passage a lady, whose glance I had met several times in the church. An alert, decided, business-like person, who stopped us suddenly, asked if my name was Maitland.

“ I daresay you have guessed already who she was—your old friend, and my conductor to Sunnyside, Mrs. Standright. She said a great deal to me, and would have said more, but that I was uneasy and impatient to get away, (rebellion, against lawful authority, being still so far from habitual, that my conscience remonstrates loudly), which, when she perceived, she kindly let me go, asking

me to come and see her, which I shall endeavour to do. It is so great a comfort to hear a kind voice.

“ When we got home I had the misfortune to meet my aunt on my way to my own room, and encountered another storm—but I am getting used to them. I am very glad that you have got friends at Lilliesleaf. How does the great dull house look when it is inhabited? Write to me, dear aunt, yourself, as large a letter as you possibly can, and do not let either Mrs. Elphinstone or her son displace me.

“ Yours affectionately,

“ GRACE MAITLAND.”

Truly I was troubled in my spirit for my dear bairn, and also for the young man, my nephew Claud, seeing he was not like to

be well pleased with the manner in which he had been dealt with ; for, though maybe I should not say it, we were a family of good lineage, and as well thought of, and also of as long standing in the countryside, as many richer folk ; and, truly I saw not any cause why a bairn of our house should put up with such affronts. But woes me ! for my dear bairn Grace, who was dwelling so among the fremd, and parted from all her friends, truly my heart was troubled, and sore within me. Nevertheless, I thought it was in no manner needful to speak of it to Mrs. Elphinstone, seeing that it was not pleasant for ourselves, and she was not altogether, in my thinking, what she had once been.

So when I came out of the seat at the window, where I had been reading the letter of my bairn, Mr. Allan was just going upon

his journey to Pasturelands, so I got him to take it over with him to Mary, my niece, the which he did blythely.

“How is your ward, Miss Maitland?” said Mrs. Elphinstone to me, when we were sitting looking after the pleasant young man riding upon his gray horse down through the long avenue.

“Well enough in health, Mrs. Elphinstone,” said I, “but troubled in spirit, seeing that though she is dwelling among her kin, they are but strangers to her.”

“If her aunt is Charles Maitland’s sister,” said Mrs. Elphinstone, “I am afraid a girl, such as you describe, will have very little sympathy with her. She was always frigid.”

“And that is just what Grace thinks,” said I. “There is my nephew Claud, Mrs. Elphinstone,” (I forgot that I did not intend

to mention that story, but indeed I just began to speak about it unwittingly) : “ Grace and him were bairns together, and Claud is now in Edinburgh; so, as was to be expected, he went to see her, and Mrs. Lennox came in, and would not hear of the two getting so much as a word together. Doubtless, he is a young man, and there might be an objection in regard to that; but it was ill done when she had to deal with the like of Grace.”

“ It was not judicious,” said Mrs. Elphinstone; “ but these very words, ‘ young man’, give her a sort of excuse. There are some people who have a terror of young people being together; very foolish, I think. I daresay I am as solicitous about Allan as any mother could be, and would like as ill that he should make any mesalliance; yet, nevertheless, I would trust him without fear in the

company of as many young ladies as the county can boast of. I am by no means nervous.”

I had a drither within myself when Mrs. Elphinstone said that. She would not have spoken in that tone when I first knew her.

“How old is your nephew, Miss Maitland?” she said to me again.

“He is one and twenty past, Mrs. Elphinstone,” said I. “You will mind my brother the minister at his years, and truly, Claud is his very picture.”

Mrs. Elphinstone smiled.

“It is hardly to be wondered at then, Miss Maitland,” she said, “that Mrs. Lennox should be chary of giving him much access to her niece. The Claud Maitland of my young days would scarcely, perhaps, have been a safe intimate for a young lady. But your

niece, Miss Maitland, who does she resemble? Is she like you?"

"Oh, no!" said I. "Mary is like her mother. Doubtless there may be a glint of the Maitland look in the bairn, which Mary, my sister, wants; but, for all that, I doubt not you would have known her for Mary Elder's bairn, wherever you had seen her."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Elphinstone, and then she abode quiet for a space, and so did I.

"I think you said your nephew had nearly finished his studies," she said awhile after.

"Claud is in his last year," said I, "and has spent his time to profit, so far as we can hear."

"And—I am an old friend you know,



Miss Maitland, you will excuse me speaking so freely," said Mrs. Elphinstone—"what are Mr. Claud's prospects when he has received license?"

I felt a kind of flush and heat come over my face, though I am sure I had no call to show any pride at a question like that.

"It is but a troublous time," said I, "for a young man beginning his warfare. My brother Claud had an old promise from the Earl, of a parish for his son—that was in the lawful way of putting him on the *leet*—but you may not have heard, Mrs. Elphinstone, being away in foreign countries so long, that there are divisions in the Kirk, and as the minister, my brother, is opposed in his principles to the folk the Earl most

inclines to, it is but uncertain whether his promise will be redeemed or no."

"I have heard of some controversy," said Mrs. Elphinstone, "but I have paid little attention to it, and, to tell the truth, have no great understanding of the points disputed. There is the parish of Langheads, you know, of which we have the patronage, but it is filled up, and I really do not know whether the incumbent is old or young—very young he cannot be, and in case of any vacancy—"

"Bless me! Mrs. Elphinstone," said I, "Mr. Upwright, of Langheads, is a man in his prime, and a better minister there is not in the whole country-side."

"Indeed! I was not aware of that," said Mrs. Elphinstone, in a kind of dry

way; "I was just about to say, Miss Maitland, that I should be glad to serve your nephew, and so, I am sure, would my son."

I thanked her, and our converse after that was stayed for a while. Truly I had little comfort in the manner of her discourse, both touching the controversy in the Kirk (as if the peace of Jerusalem and the spread of the pure Word were light things!) and the way she spoke of the seat in which sat a living man—and him a most godly and faithful minister—as if the preaching of the Word was a matter of merchandise, or a mere carnal handicraft, whereby men might win the bread that perisheth. And I was thereby led to an exercise, within my own mind, that knowledge, and light, and peace might come to her, seeing she had been

wandering upon the face of the earth for twenty weary years, seeking rest and finding none.

I saw that the young man, Allan, her one son, was just an idol to her, and truly I trembled within myself, lest the Giver should take His good gift away, because it was set in His own place ; and earnestly did I wish that, if it was His will, she might be drawn by His loving kindness and long suffering, and no by the sore stroke of His uplifted and Almighty hand.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Mr. Allan came back from the Manse, he brought a letter to me, which Claud had written to his mother, concerning his visit to Grace. Now truly, folk may think that one telling of that story is enough, yet, nevertheless, seeing it is but a short note, I think I may put it in also; and if any should be wearied of it, there can be little ill done, but just turning over the leaf, which doubtless I myself have done often in divers places of many books.

“My dear mother,

“I write out of my ordinary course, simply because I have something to tell, which I daresay will interest you more than my usual dry chronicle of student life. I told you in my last letter, that I had gone two or three times to call on Grace, and had invariably found her, according to the dictum of her aunt’s servants, at least, ‘not at home’; a circumstance which called forth from me, as you are also aware, sundry sapient remarks regarding her very sudden entry into the dissipation of fashionable life. I have discovered these same remarks to-day to be illustrious evidences of that wisdom of which Grace herself was wont to accuse me.

“Not that there is any joking in this, however, but very painful and serious earnest. I called to-day, and had just received the

usual answer, when, to my great delight, I heard Grace's own voice contradicting it, and I was admitted. She was looking thinner and paler than her wont, and had a kind of resolute and settled gravity on her face, which it pained me to see, though those bright sudden glances, which my aunt calls 'glints,' and which change her expression so instantaneously, did come back when we began to speak of Sunnyside and Pasturelands.

"I had not been with Grace ten minutes, when the door of the room we were in opened, and a very dignified and fine-looking woman made her appearance: Grace's aunt, I could not doubt. She addressed Grace as Miss Maitland, and 'was not aware she had any friends in Edinburgh.' And Grace very simply and gracefully told her who I was.

“The lady looked at me superciliously, and still addressing Grace, gave me to understand that my visit was uncalled for and impertinent, (she did not say the words, but *looked* them). You will imagine that I felt the insult abundantly; but our Grace behaved like a queen. I shall not soon forget the look with which she bade me go, and said farewell. Poor Grace! I have been in a ferment all day. Can nothing be done to deliver her from this bondage? The wrath of the aunt was not momentary, as if springing merely from my intrusion, (I could have forgiven her if it had), but, if her looks did not greatly belie her, was the fruit of a steady dislike, almost aversion, to Grace. You will think this very strange—so did I—that any mortal could dislike our Grace.



“ I have tried to set myself down quietly to study, but it will not do. I cannot get it out of my head. Calvin’s clearest propositions have grown perfectly chaotic in the whirl of my own perplexed brain. An essay, which must be given in to-morrow, lies only half finished beside me; excogitate I cannot. Our little lady and queen at Sunnyside to be so dealt with here !

“ Make Mary write me how Grace has taken this. Do not think yourself, or let my father think, that I am too indignant. With the help of my poor substitute for the midnight oil, the essay shall be finished yet, and believe me always,

“ My dear Mother,

“ Your affectionate Son,

“ CLAUD MAITLAND.”

Also I will put in here the letter which Grace had written to Mary, though I did not get it at the time, for what reason I know not; maybe because the bairn was not fond of giving it to Mr. Allan—but since it became known to them all that I was diverting myself with the writing of this history, I have seen many bits of letters that I saw not before.

So here is Grace's letter, which it will be seen is no written in the ordinary way, and would have grieved me sore if I had seen it at the time.

“Did you ever see a moth, Mary, lured by the light of a candle to brilliant self-destruction? Did you ever notice with what gaiety the poor suicide seemed to flutter about the flame before it perished? What has that to do with me, you will think! Not much,

surely, except that it is one of a whole string of sickly and distempered thoughts, and that I, like the moth, am very gay, and that, like the moth, I am in pain.

“ But we shall get out the gaiety first. I thank you, my dear sister Mary, that though you think my bondage is nearly as bad as that of the unhappy young nuns of romance, you also think that there needs to be no grating between us in our letter writing ; nay, that one could even write some things that one would not like to speak ; such things, for instance, as that little parenthesis touching the very good looks of quite young gentlemen, who come to visit my aunt at Sunnyside. Could he talk, this same good-looking Mr. Elphinstone ? And did he think, I wonder, that Mary Maitland, standing at the gate, was very good looking, too ? I am

glad that my aunt finds a friend in his mother ; but how old is this gallant horseman of yours, Mary ? I thought there had been nobody living at Lilliesleaf for a great many years, for more, indeed, than would be compatible with your 'quite young.' How much older may he be than Claud ?

“ And the name of Claud brings up my pain again—a strange effect, you will think for his name to have—but so it is. Claud will have written to you by this time, I dare say, what discourtesy his visit to me exposed him to, and the story is so painful that I do not like to repeat it—but do not be angry, Mary, because I have been the procuring cause of some insult to Claud, but be sorry for me, who must bear so much myself.

“ I have written a very little note to

Claud, which I enclose, and which, when you have read, you must send to him. I am half afraid to send it by Jessie, lest Mrs. Lennox should hear of it, and renew her accusation of unwomanliness ; so, you see, she is teaching me to deceive her.

“ You want me to keep a journal, Mary. It would not do ; so long as one’s life consists of things *done*, it is well enough ; but when it is things thought, and things imagined, that are uppermost and most important, then I am afraid it would be a very unhealthy amusement, the keeping of a journal. You will see it illustrated in some religious biographies which you and I have read together, where was laid bare the nervous anatomy of some mind—the bitterness which the heart only knoweth—the joys which a stranger may not intermeddle with—the

fluctuating feelings which do not remain the same for an hour, set down and dwelt upon till the autobiographer grew morbid.

“So let us eschew journal-keeping, Mary, until we have attained that time (if we ever attain it) when my aunt and I shall have set up our peaceful reign at Oakenshaw, our dominion of placidness and goodwill—and I would even debar it then, if any one of us, even my aunt herself, had a tendency to look back instead of forward, and to grow melancholy.

“And so, Mary, as old Dr. Driegh of Burrowstoun says, when he has finished his first head, that brings me to speak of the question contained in your secret postscript. Has my aunt been unhappy? She never told me—but I remember the hints well—and believe she has—as who has not? I

hope you yourself will be the exception, that with our father and our mother, and Claud and aunt Margaret encircling you on every side, unhappiness will never penetrate to you ; but if it does not, I am afraid, or else books and people alike tell falsely, that in this troublous world you will stand almost alone.

“ You will fancy I am setting myself up for an oracle, Mary, but mind that the old clouds which overshadowed me when I first came to Sunnyside, have returned now in double gloom. And one may gain so much experience in pain in so little time.

“ Do you know there is nothing in the world half so poetical as unhappiness ? There is Jenny, for instance, there never was a less romantic-looking person than Jenny ; yet I had some confidences given to me once, un-

folding a blurred page in Jenny's life, which bore as true and as pathetic poetry as was ever written in verse. Did you never hear of the "travelling merchant," who died far away in some English village, and nearly broke poor Jenny's heart? Who knows!—my aunt, perhaps, might not have been all she is—if she had missed her own peculiar sorrow.

"And so there you have a specimen of what my journalizing would be, so be thankful that you have failed in persuading me to begin. I wonder what Claud would say to my philosophy. By the bye, Mary, to come back to my starting point—I am very much afraid of that very good-looking young Mr. Elphinstone, of Lilliesleaf. Mind, if he comes in my way, I have already determined to be jealous exceedingly.



“ So now, good bye, for a day or two : tell me what Claud says, and with all dutiful affection to our father and mother,

“ I am, my dear Mary,

“ Your affectionate,

“ GRACE MAITLAND.”

I had to seek much before I could get my bairn's letter to Claud, for first he pretended that he knew not where it was, and then that he had not time to seek for it, by reason of having two sermons to write, but at last, seeing that I was like to grow ill-pleased, he brought it out of a deep drawer in the new-fangled table he has in his study—and this is it :—

“ Brother Claud,

“ I do not know whether to say I am

most indignant or grieved at what took place yesterday, but I am, at least, heartily sorry that so much of the disagreeables of it fell upon you. Pardon me that I crown all my youthful misdemeanours by subjecting you to the discourtesy of one whose unkindness to myself, her own near relative, is almost more than I can bear. I am never likely to try your patience again, as I have tried it often on the sunny grass of the Manse garden, or beneath the trees of Sunnyside. And when you think of these pleasant days, do not let the just indignation with which you must remember our last meeting, prejudice in your opinion your old playmate.

“GRACE MAITLAND.”

Now it will aye be remembered, that when Mr. Allan came back from the Manse,

he brought but one letter to me, and that was the letter of Claud, so I was not near so long taken up as I would have been, if I had had the whole three of them to read, as I have written them down here: so I could hear also what Mr. Allan was saying to his mother.

“Well, Allan,” said Mrs. Elphinstone, “what was the result of your embassy—success, I hope?”

“Pretty well, mother,” said Mr. Allan, “though Friday, I am afraid, is a study day, and one which Mr. Maitland does not care for being abroad upon; nevertheless, I have succeeded. When did you know me to fail?”

“Not often, certainly,” said his mother, with a smile. “Suppose we commission you, Allan, to go to Edinburgh, and try

what you can do in the way of getting Miss Maitland's young friend out to Lilliesleaf?"

"A splendid idea, mother!" cried out Mr. Allan. "I should earn Miss Mary's thanks and gratitude, I am sure—that is, if my wonted good fortune did not altogether forsake me."

Mrs. Elphinstone gave a kind of start, and fixed her eyes full upon him; which, doubtless, being out of her ordinary mode, the colour rose high in the young man's cheek. "Miss Mary!" she said, "Whom do you mean, Allan?"

"Oh, Miss Mary Maitland, mother," said Mr. Allan, turning round about, away from her, "the very intimate friend and companion of the young lady you have just mentioned."

“Indeed,” said Mrs. Elphinstone in her cold way, (for truly she could cause folk to feel ill at ease when she liked). “You are wonderfully well informed, Allan.”

And so the conversation stopped for a while. And then, when I myself came out of the seat in the window, and Mrs. Elphinstone behoved to speak again, it was in the manner of one, who was not pleased with something. So the converse turned upon the young man, my nephew Claud.

“Do you not envy Mr. Claud Maitland his residence in Edinburgh, Allan?” said his mother, “Confess now, that you are fairly tired of your self-immolation.”

Mr. Allan looked at her in a wondering manner.

“I really do not understand you, mother,” he said. “I am perfectly ready to confess

that I very much desire Mr. Claud Maitland's return, for my own behoof, and on behalf of the limited public of Pastureland; but why I should confess to *envy* him, I don't clearly see. Miss Maitland would denounce me if I did."

"Surely, Mr. Allan," said I, "it would be sinning your mercies."

"*We* are not the best judges in the world, I fancy, Miss Maitland," said Mrs. Elphinstone, with a kind of smile, "of what should suit Allan. To be at home and quiet, with a little pleasant company now and then, is the summit of your wishes or mine; but Allan is young, and full of health and spirits; it is variety and change he requires, not rest. I warned him that he would have to pay the penalty, if he insisted on shutting himself up in this very quiet and sombre country;

but it will not do. I cannot let you sacrifice yourself to me, Allan. I must send you away."

"There happens to be two voices in that proceeding, mother," said Mr. Allan, who had been sitting in an impatient way, waiting till she was done; and I shall take care to exercise that power of veto, the ecclesiastical operation of which Mr. Maitland was expounding to me to-day. So I also say it won't do; and of all things which are hard to overcome, passive resistance is the hardest."

"We studied economy, Allan and I," said Mrs. Elphinstone, speaking to me, and without heeding the young man, "when we established ourselves in Germany three and twenty years ago; but fortunately that is over, and Allan Elphinstone of Lilliesleaf may

take his place now with any gentleman in Scotland. Do you not think, then, Miss Maitland, that it would be perfectly ridiculous for a young man of Allan's education to confine himself to an obscure corner of the country like this?"

I knew not well what to say, and was at a loss within myself, being feared, seeing the humour she was in, that Mrs. Elphinstone might put a meaning on my words.

"Let me have your vote, Miss Maitland," cried out Mr. Allan, in a laughing manner to me. "You are in duty bound to declare Pasturelands the most suitable place in the world for men of every degree. Have we not moors of our own, populous with game? Are there not minnows by the million in Sedgie Burn? And is there not a water where one may get a glorious nibble now



and then, of nobler prey? Speak for me, Miss Maitland—does not the shadow of an Earl dignify the land? Does not yonder curious gaping Burrowstoun enliven it? And what further would we have? I have had a flying encounter with my mother's vanguard. Come down upon her, Miss Maitland, and cut her whole army in pieces."

"Truly, I cannot call myself anything of a right judge, Mrs. Elphinstone," said I, "as you have well said, seeing I am but a lone gentlewoman, living in a most quiet manner, of what is fit for a young man of Mr. Allan's parts and culture; nevertheless, it seems in my eyes that one in the station that Providence has put him in, is as like to do his duty, both to God and man, dwelling

in his own house of Lilliesleaf, as in any place through the wide world.”

The two—the mother and the son—did not speak for a minute, but just sat and looked at me.

“My duty to God and to man,” said Mr. Allan, repeating the words after me. “Ah, but I am afraid, mother, that neither you nor I were thinking about that.” And thereupon the converse stopped, for the young man looked to me to have taken a meditative turn, and his mother being also, as it seemed, in a disposition of quietness, I went away straightway up the stair to my own room, to write a letter to my bairn.

So after that, I mind not anything that is needful to mention, until upon the Friday the minister, and Mary my sister, and the

bairn Mary, came from the Manse, according to the invitation of Mrs. Elphinstone. Mr. Allan himself looked just uplifted about them ; but I saw his mother give a jealous look now and then at Mary, my niece, the innocent bairn ! as if there was like to be guile in so young a head as hers. And truly, though, maybe I should not say it, it was just a pleasure to look upon her.

She had on, as was natural, her best dress, which was silk of a changing colour, (like what the bits of scented lads in the haberdashers' shops call shot). It was Claud's taste, for he had bought it in Edinburgh, two dresses in the piece, and one of them was for Grace. Truly, my heart yearned within me over the one that was away. If my dear bairn had only been there also !

We were all in a kind of restraint at the dinner, for it seemed to me that Mrs. Elphinstone was scarce so blythe to welcome her friends as she was keen to get them. Nevertheless, when the night wore on (maybe because her heart was warmed with old memories), the cold look wore away, and we began to have pleasant converse, seeing we had all been known to one another in the blythe season of youth ; though by reason of that, the two young things, Mr. Allan and Mary, were more left to their own cracks than in my eyes was altogether needful ; wherefore I parted myself from Mrs. Elphinstone, and drew near to Mary, that the lady might see that if her son was of much import to her, so was our bairn to us.

Yet nevertheless it was a pleasant night, and the minister and Mary, my sister, were

both well pleased, and Mrs. Elphinstone did not gloom again till Mr. Allan, like a wilful lad as he was, would insist on going down all the long avenue with them, to set them on their way. So that night past, and upon the Sabbath, Mr. Allan and me were at the kirk, hearing the minister, my brother, and so there happened little more that I mind of, till upon the Tuesday morning there came a letter from my Grace.

Now, it may be thought by some folk, that I myself might tell the things that were in Grace's letters, without giving the bairn's own epistles for the printers to put in printed type; but it seems best to me to let the true history aye come from the real living tongue of them it belongs

to: therefore I will just put the letters in.—

“ My dear aunt,

“ I read your last letter with even more than ordinary interest, and thank you heartily for the information you have gathered for me about my poor mother. I have not any recollection of her; but there are shreds of old stories floating in my memory, which, though I could not make anything of them by themselves, serve to corroborate what Mrs. Elphinstone said. So far at least (for children surely must be able to feel indignation strongly) as regards my father's conduct to my mother, I must have heard it spoken of long ago, before I came to Sunnyside. You will not

be surprised, dear aunt, that this subject should occupy my mind very much, especially when you hear what I have to tell you.

“On Friday morning, before I was able to make my escape into my own room, my cousin Harriet suddenly called me to the window; a carriage had drawn up at the door immediately before she did so; and I obeyed her.

“‘I want you to see this gentleman,’ said Harriet, with a mischievous smile. ‘Look; what do you think of him?’

“A tall fashionable-looking man came out of the carriage as she spoke; he began to speak, evidently in a harsh and imperious way, to the servants, and after giving a great many orders to one, who seemed his valet, or some such confidential person, entered the house.

“ ‘ He seems a haughty and disagreeable man,’ I said ; ‘ who is he ?’

“ Harriet laughed.

“ ‘ You shall discover that immediately, Miss Maitland. Shall I ring for your maid, and order her to have restoratives ready, in case you should faint.’

“ I could only look bewildered, and had not even time to ask further, when the door opened, and the stranger entered.

“ Mrs. Lennox sprang up and cried ‘ Charles !’

“ Madeline extended her hand gracefully, and said : ‘ How do you do, uncle ? What a surprise !’

“ And he was finally introduced to me. It was my father !

“ I did not faint, aunt, or scream, or tremble ; but I felt my heart beating strong



against my breast, and the rebellious spirit rising within me, in spite of all my efforts to restrain it, for one of the first questions my father asked me, was, 'What was my name? upon his word, it had quite escaped his memory.'

"Not that he was very unkind in his looks or expressions: there was a glance of somewhat keen curiosity at first, and then a little half contemptuous conversation, much in Harriet's manner. His arrival had not been expected for two or three days longer, which I suppose was the reason I did not hear of it, and during the animated conversation which commenced immediately, concerning their friends whom he had seen, and the places he had been visiting, I, who had no part in the family, stole disconsolately away.

“But I have not yet told out my story. There is a small boudoir opening from Mrs. Lennox’s drawing-room, in which I happened to be sitting alone on Saturday, having fallen upon a book which interested me. My aunt, I dare say, did not know where I was, for the little *bower* had scarcely ever before been profaned by my plebeian foot. The door was a-jar, and as I sat, I heard the voices of my aunt and my father in earnest conversation. I could not escape without encountering one of those terrible frowns of displeasure which Mrs. Lennox has succeeded in making me so fearful of, and as I heard her repeat several times the words ‘your daughter,’ I sat still and listened.

“You will think this another dereliction from Sunnyside ideas of right and wrong,

but if you consider, aunt, how much I am in the dark as to everything which concerns myself, and also that the speakers were my nearest relatives, you may find some excuse for me. The first thing I heard distinctly was from my father.—

“‘She’s a vast deal too like her mother. Pah! the sight of her made me shiver.’

“‘She happens to be like her mother in more things than features and complexion,’ said my aunt. ‘She has the very same abominable disposition; speaks about right and wrong, forsooth, in the same dictatorial tone, as if *she*, by any possibility, could be a judge. Coercion is the only thing for these rebellious spirits, Charles, and fortunately she has no idea of——,’ and here Mrs. Lennox’s voice sank so low, that though I

was very curious, I could not make out a word.'

" ' Ah, that's well,' said my father ; ' but, Harriet, you had always an immense dislike to her mother. Now, except her pale face, which always chilled me, and her unbearable propensity to interfere with what one did, and her pietism, and her opinions : why, really, upon my word, I don't remember anything so very bad about her.'

" My aunt laughed.

" ' Quite, enough, I think,' she said. ' Your memory is very good, I assure you ; but this girl is worse still, if possible. What do you think of her having the presumption to receive a young man in my house, a country friend, forsooth ; and when I ordered her to dismiss him, making a scene, and

doing it like a tragedy queen; there is an exemplary young lady for you.'

“‘Ah, that won't do,’ said my father. ‘I'll tell you, Harriet, we've made a mistake. We should have sent her to France or Switzerland, as I thought of doing some half dozen years ago, where we might have married her to some clown, and got rid of her. But then there's that Monteith,—and I suppose his promise to say nothing about it, won't include her—has Monteith seen her yet?’

“‘No,’ said Mrs. Lennox, ‘and I shall take care that he sees as little of her as possible. Your plans were not matured early enough, Charles. She is no child now, and Monteith might (it's quite like him) talk to her about it.’

“ ‘ Well, it can't be helped,’ said my father, “ we must take our chance now, and, (it's worth a little trouble) keep her off the scent as well as we can. If she's so like her mother as you say, she ought to be quick enough.’

“ ‘ Nonsense,’ said my aunt, angrily. “ I tell you, Charles, and I have told you often, that her mother had no talent. I wonder you will persist in such an absurd idea.’

“ I heard my father laugh, rise from his seat, say, in a careless tone,—

“ ‘ As you like, Harriet : it's a matter of perfect indifference to me :’ and saunter away.

“ So the conversation ended ; but not the ferment it put me in. What can it all mean ?

“ I am very much perplexed and be-

wildered, and know not well what to do. If I could only come home—but, no doubt, there is a certain obedience, at least, due to my father. Give me counsel, dear aunt. I never did need it so much: I don't think it is possible I can ever need it more. I shall be on the watch for this Mr. Monteith they spoke of, and try if I can glean anything from him. But then they do not suffer me to be with them, when visitors are in the house. I never regretted that before.

“I suppose I must come to an end now, having nothing but my own wonderings and bewilderments to speak of. I have got into a habit of pausing at the end of every sentence, to consider how you would answer me, and with almost an expectation sometimes of hearing your voice. What would I not give to do so; but, in the meantime, I

suppose I must resign myself to bid you good bye again.

“ Your most affectionate,

“ GRACE MAITLAND.”

Truly my spirit was troubled and perplexed within me when I got that letter, even as the spirit of my bairn was perplexed and troubled ; for I knew not what to think concerning the converse of her father and her aunt. Only it came into my mind, that maybe he might be feared for her hearing that he had been but an ill man to her mother, and so her heart being turned against him, and her his only bairn : and yet I saw not how that could be it either. And then there was the name, Monteith—Monteith !

It was a name I had known well in



my young days, and maybe it was because Mrs. Elphinstone had brought it up again that it struck me so. And it was not what you could call an uncommon name either, and there were plenty, doubtless, in Edinburgh, that bore it. But everyway I was sore perplexed about my bairn.

Likewise, I was wearying sore in my own spirit, to get home to my quiet habitation, (though doubtless it would be but solitary, seeing the bairns were all away), for I had been at Lilliesleaf a full week. Nevertheless, neither Mrs. Elphinstone nor Mr. Allan would hear of me going away, and I had to promise to abide with them seven days longer.

## CHAPTER IX.

“ You live all the year round at Sunnyside, do you not, Miss Maitland ?” said Mr. Allan to me, the second morning after that, which was the Thursday.

“ Yes, Mr. Allan,” said I : “ where would you have me to live else, but in my own house ? But I am sometimes a week now and then up at the Manse.”

“ And you are never overcome with *ennui* !” exclaimed Mr. Allan, in a kind of petted impatient way. “ You are never

bored—you don't anathematize the country. Oh, I beg your pardon, Miss Maitland, I forgot that you never anathematize anything—but this everlasting sameness does not disgust *you*."

"Whisht, Mr. Allan," said I, "use not such words! But wherefore should I be wearied?"

"Ay, to be sure, wherefore should you? that's just what I can't make out!" said Mr. Allan. "It is the easiest thing in the world to discover that one *is* tremendously weary; but the wherefore—that's the difficulty."

"And are you wearied of Lilliesleaf so soon, Mr. Allan?" said I. "It vexes me to hear you say that, for you will scarce have been here a month yet."

Mr. Allan looked through the window and

down at the floor, and round to his mother's empty chair, for she was not in the room, being aye rather late of rising in the morning.

“ I believe it's only my mother who has put it into my head,” he said, blurring out the words, as if he thought shame. “ I'm a pretty fellow, am I not, Miss Maitland, to throw away my toys, and then cry for them like a spoiled child? and it's not so much that either as—well, never mind, it's no matter what it is! Were country gentlemen made for any possible use, think you, Miss Maitland? or, was it only for an example to the whole busy world about them, of the plagues and the pains of idleness?”

“ Truly, Mr. Allan,” said I, “ I think, that is but an ill way to speak of the good purposes of Providence, and in

an especial manner, does not become you, who have been gifted with so many good gifts."

Mr. Allan looked at me in a graver manner.

"I believe your notions and mine are about as different as Heaven and earth, Miss Maitland," he said. "I think of some occupation merely as a relief to my idleness; while you are framing great plans which comprehend—well, I hardly know what, none at least than I can think through this morning. We'll put off speaking about them till some more convenient season. Oh, but don't be afraid of me either!" for he saw that I was looking at him feared like, and his pleasant smile came out from behind the clouds that were upon his face. "I really do not

intend to be a Felix—the convenient season shall come by and bye. So now tell me how you think I should employ myself?”

“It’s no of an old wife like me that you should ask such a question, Mr. Allan,” said I; “and who will venture to say that the convenient season shall come. I knew one once that was like to yourself, Mr. Allan Elphinstone. He was young and light of heart, well endowed in this world’s goods, and well gifted by nature, and with a blythe spirit and a generous, like unto your own; but he put off his convenient season, Mr. Allan; he thought there would be time enough by and bye for minding his chief end; he did not the duty, and he sought not the grace and the strength, and in the time of temptation he

fell, and woeful and great was the fall of him.”

It was a sad story, that, for me to tell, and a hard, for the subject of it was one whose name I had not spoken for years. And, seeing that I was moved, Mr. Allan turned his head about, and spoke not a word, for, doubtless, he was a lad of a most kindly nature, and demeaned himself to me, like as if he had been one of our own bairns.

At last, after awhile, he said to me in a more cheerful manner, being at the time walking about the room. “Do you never feel lonely at Sunnyside, Miss Maitland?”

“Hitherto, Mr. Allan,” said I, “the bairns have never given me time to have

any lone feeling, seeing they were aye coming and going about me ; but, doubtless, I will feel Sunnyside but a solitary place now, when my Grace is away."

"But you will have visitors from Pasturelands often," said Mr. Allan, in a kind of careless way. "I wonder Mrs. Maitland is not jealous ; I think Miss Mary says aunt as often as mother."

"Mary is a good bairn," said I, "and has been a great comfort to me since Grace left us ; but I can only see her now and then ; for you know, Mr. Allan, it would not be meet that the house of my sister and my brother should be darkened to make mine light."

Mr. Allan looked down to the floor, and began twirling a chair round upon one of



its feet, with a strange smile upon his face.

“Do you think it would darken the Manse so completely, Miss Maitland?” he said, and aye he looked down and twirled the chair, and smiled, as if there was something in that that pleased him just wonderfully. “I dare say it would, and lighten Sunnyside, or—any other house, in due proportion. Well, but then, you know, there is Mr. Claud, your nephew, to brighten it up again: so you need not be so scrupulous.”

And there the young man stood before me, holding down his head and smiling, till I knew not what he would be at. “But all this has nothing to do with my future employment,” said Mr. Allan, looking up to me again. “What would you re-

commend me to do, Miss Maitland? Go and offer myself as an assistant to your friend and my mother's, Reuben Reid? or set up an amateur carpentry establishment at Lilliesleaf—or turn model farmer—or slaughter the hapless game which has been preserved so long—or get up private concerts and theatricals—or give parties—or what, Miss Maitland? Suggest something, I beseech you; I am out of breath.”

“Truly, Mr. Allan,” I said, “I am feared that I could not in my conscience recommend any of these things.”

“I have no genius for reforming the Kirk, Miss Maitland,” said the young man, merrily, “or I dare say you would approve of that. And what am I to do? Shall I have a mysterious paragraph inserted in the papers, to the effect that Allan Elphinstone, of Lil-

liesleaf, is about to astonish the world with a new novel, the most original of fictions? Or shall I fit up a dim study, and write poems? Or shall I get a laboratory, and work dire experiments to the terror of all Pasturelands? Or shall I establish myself at the highest window of the highest turret, and discover planets? There! I don't recollect any other varieties of learned leisure, or occupation at this moment. Decide for me, Miss Maitland, what shall I do?

“Well, Mr. Allan,” said I, “doubtless it would take a genius to do the like of these things well, as well as to reform the Kirk, and maybe—”

“Maybe I am not so gifted,” said Mr. Allan, laughing. “You are most unmerciful, Miss Maitland; nevertheless, it is useless

denying it, I have a suspicion that the genius *is* wanting, and so there we are just where we began, and I must set off to the Manse to consult the minister. I see you don't intend to give me any advice."

Now it was no wish of mine that Mr. Allan should be much going about the Manse; and just at that time a thought came into my head that had often struck me before.

"There is no doubt, Mr. Allan," said I, "that it would be a very right thing to speak to the minister; but I'll tell you where you'll get a work ready to your hands, the which would both be well befitting the Laird of Lilliesleaf, and a charity to the countryside forbye. There is a place at Burrowstoun called Cruive End, lying upon your own lands; and (though it's a shame to myself,

as well as to every Christian man and woman nearhand, that it should be so), yet it must be said that it is a heathen place, and being a heathen place, Mr. Allan, it is likewise a place of pestilence, and a place of violence, contentions and disputations round about it, and plagues and fevers in the bits of houses, mostly every harvest time, when the poor Irish shearer bodies come in to crowd the place; and doubtless, Mr. Allan, there might be a good work done there, if the folk could but be brought out of darkness and of idleset, to learn the Gospel, and to work honest work."

Mr. Allan's eyes shone out a light like the sparkle of a fire.

"Pestilence and violence, dirt and poverty!" he cried out. "Splendid, Miss Maitland, and on my own estate too; almost too good

news to be true! we'll have at it immediately! I shall ride down to-day, and begin. Cruive End! There is an expressive odour about the very name. But there, now, you are looking grave again. I have surely said nothing wrong just now."

"No, Mr. Allan," said I; "but it was as a serious thing that I was speaking about these benighted heathen folk."

"To be sure," said Mr. Allan, "and am not I most serious in speaking of them? The houses are bad, and filthy, and abominable. Well, we'll pull them down, and build better. The people are pestilent, idle, and good for nothing, of course. Well, we'll have a school for the little pigs, and baths and wash-houses and libraries for the big ones, and see if we don't civilize them. I shall earn my honours, Miss Maitland. I

feel the laurels upon my brow already. The regenerator of Cruive End !”

“ Ay, Mr. Allan,” said I, “ but I never heard of any people yet that were regenerated with baths.”

“ There is my mother at last,” cried out Mr. Allan, and off he went to meet her, so full of his new plan, that he never heeded what I said.

So immediately after the breakfast was past, Mr. Allan set away down to Cruive End, for he was one of the kind that have ever a necessity for doing with all their might whatsoever their hand finds to do. So he told me he would call in by Sunnyside, and see if there were any letters, for, being of a considerate nature, he aye minded that I was anxious about tidings from my dear bairn.

It was far on in the day when he came back, and brought me a letter from Grace, which I will just take in.—

“ My dear aunt,

“ I have had sundry qualms of conscience lately, as to the propriety of writing to you as I have hitherto done, that is, entering into all the minutiae of my disagreeables. If I have grieved you, dear aunt, forgive me ; I did not intend it—but only thought of pouring out my troubles, and receiving in return your most kind, most soothing sympathy. Shall I confess what it is, which has troubled my conscience in this respect? Forgive me again, aunt, it was a novel. A novel, the heroine of which, like me, delivered herself from Sabbath imprisonment (do not think me her copyist here, I had two emancipated



Sabbaths before I read a word of her history) but unlike me, kept her misfortunes to herself, to save her distant friends from suffering with her. Perhaps I, too, might have been as disinterested, if you had brought me up better, but the perfect family confidence of Sunnyside and the Manse has spoiled me, so you must just put up with me, aunt, remembering that it is your own kindness which has made me so selfish.

“I have a story to tell you to-day, the very sad history of my poor mother. Yesterday, while I was writing to Mary, Jessie Gray came to me, asking me to let her mother come in and see me, as “all the ladies” were out. Her mother had been in her youth a servant of mine, so, of course, I bade Jessie bring her in. The mother is a

very nice, clean, well-preserved little old woman, with a kindly face, to which my heart warmed, and one of those pleasant tongues, that go on easily without any assistance from without, except now and then a question, or a monosyllable, by way of connection. Our conversation began by Mrs. Gray's earnest declaration the moment she entered the room, that I was "my mother's very picture,"—and then followed questions as to whether I recollected Mrs. Shaw, the person who had kept me before I went to Sunnyside, and whom I remember calling nurse.

"Mrs. Shaw was the widow of Mrs. Gray's brother, and 'kent many things,' the honest old woman said, 'that she had nae call to ken,' and was sent to America,

by my father, to join some friends she had there, and again Mrs. Gray reiterated 'Just her mother's very image. I ne'er saw the like o't.' So I asked her if she had known my mother.

" 'Ay, Miss Maitland,' was the answer, 'I saw her in her cradle, and I saw her in her coffin; and for years, when she was growing up to be a woman, she wadna hae a hand about her but my ain, sae ye may think I kent her look weel, and mind it, Miss Grace. Waes me! it's a strange thing to see the same face, and say the same name again, and her been in her grave this sixteen year.'

"I went on to ask further questions, and then came a full history, which I shall give you in her own words. Before she began, however, with rare delicacy, she

contrived that Jessie should be sent out of the room.

“ ‘Ye see, Miss Grace,’ began Mrs. Gray, ‘your mother was an ae bairn, and the last of her name, and by reason of her happening to be a lassie, when she suld have been a lad, she didna get a’ the land, some o’t being bound down in an entail, no to pass out o’ the name, (though nae doubt Hunterland was a cauld rife and ill-lying place, compared to Oakenshaw). It was an auld family, the Hunters of Oakenshaw, and your mother’s ain grandmother was the dochter of an Earl, Leddy Grizzy. I hae seen her picture mony a time, and grim and gray she lookit.

“ ‘Weel, our Miss Grace’s mother, Mrs. Hunter, died when she was but a bairn, and her father when she wasna out sixteen,

and a sore, sore heart it was to her. And so she abode in Oakenshaw, with a douce eldern leddy that had been her governess, a widow with no bairns, and few friends but Miss Grace. And a very quiet life it was, maybe ower quiet for the like of a young thing like her; though, doubtless, there were ladies and young folk coming whiles about the house, and aunts and cousins, and such far-awa friends coorting at her—for them that have plenty o' the unrighteous Mammon, Miss Maitland, will aye hae flatterers—I mind of ane in especial, Miss Grizzy, that lived in the jointure-house on the Crookit-horn brae, and was ca'ed after the auld Ledy Grizel, wha would fain have bidden still at Oakenshaw. I mind of hearing a converse ae day, when I was doing something about my young lady, atween

Miss Grizzy and the other leddies, and Miss Grizzy was up-hauding that it wasna right to let Miss Grace bide in that quiet way, but that she bid to come out, and Miss Grizzy behoved to gang with her to chaper—chaper something, I mind na how they ca'ed it—but our Miss Grace would never hear o' that.

“ ‘ But I am just wearying ye with a lang tale, Miss Maitland. Your mother might be your ain age, maybe no that oot, when Mr. Charles Maitland came on a visit to the young Laird of Helmless, and it was not long before the auld lady and wild Miss Nora (her mother was frae the North country, the which, I suppose had gotten her, her outlandish name) had him over to Oakenshaw.’

“ ‘ Ye hae seen your father, Miss Grace.

You ken yoursel what like he is the now ;  
But then he was as gallant and braw a  
young gentleman as you could see in a'  
the Lowdens ; and as for booklearn, and  
things learned by travel, and knowledge  
o' a' kinds, you would have thought he was  
just filled fu' o' them. And our young  
lady had doubtless seen little out of her  
ain house, but she had read books on  
books, as mony as would fill a' this  
room, or mair ; and Mr. Maitland could  
speak to her about them in a way that  
neither the young laird, nor Miss Nora,  
could. I say them, because they were our  
nearest neighbours, and Miss Nora would  
have gaen through fire and water for  
Miss Grace, and Helmless himsel, folks  
said, took weary looks at her on the

Sabbath days, for the Oakenshaw pew was forenent theirs.

“ ‘ He was a douce lad, then, young Helmless, though he has gaen sair ajee sinsyne. But you will think that has little to do wi’t, Miss Maitland. So frae less to mair, it cam’ about, as ye ken yoursel as well as me, that our Miss Grace was married upon the strange young gentleman. There was some kind of trouble about it, for the old Edinburgh gentlemen, that were her guardians, demurred, folks said, on account o’ Mr. Maitland having unco little in the way o’ gear compared to Miss Grace; but she wasna the ane to heed that, and it was settled at last: so they were married. But Miss Grace, though it’s maybe no right to tell you sic a thing, six months



after that wedding was over, you would scarce have kent the young lady of Oakenshaw again.'

"You will well imagine, aunt, how deeply interesting that story was to me, and I intreated Mrs. Gray, who now seemed reluctant and uneasy, to go on, which she did at length, with hesitation.

" 'I had been married, mysel, upon my man, John Gray, a good while before that,' she continued, 'for I was a hantle aulder than the young lady. John was a forester, and we got the lodge on the Westergate road, to keep (it's shut up and deserted noo, for a' the pains *she* took wi't, and for a' sae bonnie a place as it is). If ye ever come to your ain, Miss Grace, you should pit some decent body intill't, for *her* sake, that's awa. There's

my own Jannie that's coming into the cares of a family; but truly you will think I am no blate to be asking the like of that the noo. But as I was saying, Miss Grace, I saw the young lady often, when she was taking her bit walk her lane, or passing the gate in the carriage, and so I noticed the change.

“ ‘Ye are pale yoursel, Miss Grace, and have little colour on your cheek, and so was your mother; but she had a glint.—Losh! there it's rising on your ain face, the very same as it used to do on hers, like the passing o' a licht ower't—but she dwined, Miss Grace, and the bonnie, changefu' glinting light gaed away, and in its place there came a steadfast whiteness, that I never saw the like o', and whiles a flushing of deep deep red, that I would never like' to see again.

“ ‘And what?’ said I, eagerly—‘was it *his* fault? What was the cause?’

“Mrs. Gray hesitated long, and I could scarcely get her to go on.

“ ‘Mr. Maitland was a gay young gentleman,’ she said, at last, in a very serious and subdued voice, ‘and likit company and diversion and change, and your mother, Miss Grace, (maybe it might be wi’ her douce upbringing, maybe wi’ the sore shadow o’ death fa’ing on her when she was little mair than a bairn) was ane that cared for nane o’ thae things, but built up her pleasure in her ain hame. I have seen her stop at my door mony a time when I was sorting my man’s dinner, wi’ Jessie a bairn in the cradle and Jamie a stirring laddie at my fit, and me hurrying for John coming in to his meat: I hae seen her

stand still awhile, just looking at us, and then I hae heard a deep, lang sigh. The Almighty forbid that I should ever hear young thing drawing sic anither.'

"Mrs. Gray paused again, and then, without further solicitation from me, went on, as if she herself was too much interested in the story to give it up.

"'Mr. Maitland gaed to Edinburgh, Miss Grace, and he gaed to London, and he gaed abroad, and my young lady abode her weary lane in Oakenshaw, dwining and growing whiter every day; and I have heard the servants about the place say, that even the letters were unco few, and long times between them. And a sore heart it was to every mortal about the place, for she had been the pride o' us a'. I have seen

Miss Nora sit down among the bushes by the water-side, where naebody could see her, and greet like to break her heart, and when she heard my fit once—for the water ran sougning by our very door—she said to me, ‘ Oh ! Jenny Shaw (for that was my ain name) how different my brother would have been.’

“ ‘ But, at last, Miss Grace, you came hame in the spring o’ the year, and we thocht, for a while, that a’thing was gaun to mend. I was often at the Place then, for I had a wee blossom o’ my ain a week before the lady’s, that the Lord gathered the day after His name was named upon it—sae I whiles helped to nurse yoursel, Miss Grace—and your life was like new life to a’ the house, and in especial to your mother. Weel, by and bye, Mr. Maitland

came hame, and wi' him a company o' gay and wild young gentlemen, and the lady here, Mrs. Lennox, and her guidman among them; but *our* lady's strength wasna a' spent, and some of them she would not suffer below her roof, and muckle dispeace there was about it, though it was only them that were weel kent for open reprobates that she lifted her voice against. And then her ain auld friends having nae great favour for Mr. Maitland, fell a' away, and Miss Nora, o' Helmless, was married upon a gentleman far away in the north country, and your mother was left her leelane wi' a housefu' o' strangers, and this Mrs. Lennox aye trying to mock at her, and Mr. Maitland—weel, weel, you are *his* bairn, Miss Grace, as well as hers, and it becomes me not to speak this way to you.'

“ I felt that it did not, aunt ; nevertheless, I also felt it necessary that I should hear all. Mrs. Gray had wrought herself into indignant vehemence by this time ; and partly to moderate her, partly that her censures might not fall so directly upon the man whom I must still call father, I asked if the governess to whom she said my mother was so much attached, remained with her then—

“ ‘ He wanted the lady to part wi’ her, when they were first married,’ said Mrs. Gray, indignantly. ‘ I canna help it, Miss Grace, my mouth is opened, and I maun speak. But your mother would not consent to that ; only the auld lady got rooms that were mostly like a separate house, where Mr. Maitland needed never see her, if he didna like her ; but when this Mrs. Lennox came, she got into the old lady’s quiet room, and

gecked at her, and taunted her, when your mother wasna there, till she took it into her own hands, and gaed away from Oakenshaw. It was a wrang thing, and a faint-hearted, to leave the puir young lady in her extremity ; but so she did.

“ ‘ And then ? ’ said I.

“ ‘ And then, Miss Grace,’ said Mrs. Gray, solemnly, ‘ after lang endurance and muckle pain, afore you had won through twa years o’ your pilgrimage, your mother ended her’s. I mind her as if it had been yesterday, wi’ her lang black hair and her white face, and the dead baby lying in her arm. Waes me !, waes me !’

“ ‘ I was not my mother’s only child, then,’ I said, as well as I was able.

“ ‘ It was dead, Miss Grace,’ said Mrs. Gray ; ‘ and it’s no my part to say wha’s



blame *that* was. But before the sod had lain on their head a week, the young mother and the bairn that never saw the light o' day, *he* was away to London, with no a sign o' mourning about him, but the crape on his hat and the black claes.'

"I was little inclined to speak after that sad story was finished, and my poor mother's kind humble friend had become excited and vehement, and scarcely joined in my tears. We sat a long time in silence after that, and then Mrs. Gray left me, promising to return, and to bring me a lock of my mother's hair, which she herself had cut off from the brow of the dead.

"And now, aunt, what think you of this story. I inherit my mother's name, and face, and nature, they say, and yet I must submit to the sway of these people who

broke my mother's heart. Oh, aunt! is it not a sad story? Ask Mrs. Elphinstone if she knows anything more. I could almost supplicate Mrs. Lennox even, to tell me about my mother, and will long for Mrs. Gray's return, almost as I would for a visit from you.

“Mary must want her letter to-day. It was lying before me while Mrs. Gray was speaking, and got blistered and obliterated before I was aware. Tell her the reason and she will excuse me. Write to me yourself about my mother, and believe me ever,

“My dear aunt,

“Your most affectionate,

“GRACE MAITLAND.”

I marvelled that the bairn should mind

everything Mrs. Gray said so well as to put t down in her own very words to be sent to me ; but, doubtless, when folk have much interest in a thing, it quickens the memory in a wonderful degree. I know by myself that there is converse that passed in my young days, as clear in my mind the now, as if it had been spoken yesterday ; and Grace had aye a turn for the like of that.

But woes me, it was a sad, sad story ! I could not think of it without trembling for my own bairn, lest the like should befall her. I have aye had a drither all my days about the marrying of young things, for truly, whatever way you can take it, it is a sore venture, and in an especial manner, for the like of my bairn Grace. Nevertheless, I have no call to put in a discourse about that,

seeing folk have aye had their own thought concerning these matters, and will aye continue to have, as far as I can see.

I had some converse with Mrs. Elphinstone that afternoon, whenever I had read Grace's letter, concerning the poor young mother that had been sacrificed that way, but this world is a coldrife world, and the like of these things are no uncommon ; wherefore Mrs. Elphinstone spoke of it in but a light way. Also I was not pleased with a bit half-mocking smile that came upon her face, when I said that my bairn was wearying sore for her own home. Truly it is a cold world, and Mrs. Elphinstone had been much in the very midst of it, and besides that, she knew not either the nature or the upbringing of our bairns. But just then, Mr. Allan came in, and truly my bit

anger (and it was not anger either, only I was not just pleased) melted away before his blythe face.

“Miss Maitland,” he cried out to me, “how could you be so cruel as to keep me so long in ignorance of Cruive End. It’s a very Utopia for an improver, and an improver I have vowed myself from this day henceforth. Mother, you are half an artist: plan me a pretty village. But prettiness won’t do either—you will never be able to come half up to the picturesque barbarism of Cruive End.”

“The young ladies at the Castle,” said I, “wanted the women to wear jacket things, and coats of many colours, Mr. Allan, to make them picturesque; but say you that Cruive End is so in its natural state?”

Mr. Allan laughed.

“ Perfectly so, Miss Maitland ; at least so far as my judgment goes. But, mother, I insist, you must go with me to see Cruive End in its natural state, or else you never will believe me afterwards, when you see it improved, as to what it has been.”

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