

Gertrude the Emigrant: A Tale of Colonial Life

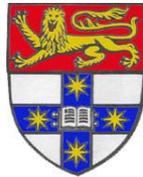
Atkinson, Caroline Louisa (1834-1872)

A digital text sponsored by
Australian Literature Electronic Gateway

University of Sydney Library

Sydney, Australia

2002



<http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/oztexts>
© University of Sydney Library. The texts and images are not to be used
for commercial purposes without permission

Source Text:

Prepared against the print edition published by J. R. Clarke, Sydney
1857

All quotation marks are retained as data.

First Published: 1857

setis australian etexts women writers novels 1840-1869

Gertrude the Emigrant

A Tale of Colonial Life

Sydney

J. R. Clarke

1857

To The Reader.

AFTER a work has been six months before the public, the time has evidently passed for a prefatory notice; nor can it then be truly introduced; there remains therefore only some erroneous impressions to correct, and to return a most cordial expression of thanks to the Press, and the readers of "Gertrude," for the kind spirit in which an Australian's endeavours to portray the incidents of every day life enacting around her, have been received.

A common impression appears to be that a Colonial Tale must necessarily involve the histories of prominent persons, and infringe the privacy of personal affairs. In more than one instance the writer has met with this feeling clinging to the minds of her kindly readers. Let them dismiss such an idea utterly, in her case; let them receive in good faith the assurance which the Title page puts forth, that it is a *Tale*.

"Let the dead past, bury its dead!"

exclaims the American poet—Longfellow. Far too sacred are the affairs of her neighbours to the writer of "Gertrude," to be rudely brought before the public, and bartered for gain. In some few cases she has drawn a portrait from life, where death, or other causes have rendered her doing so no longer objectionable; and these exceptions refer only to a peculiar nationality, which without borrowing from nature an Australian could not truthfully depict.

Gertrude, the Emigrant Girl: A Tale of Colonial Life

Chapter I

“Days—weeks past away, till one evening serene
As Phoebus was slowly descending,
The cliffs of Australia at distance were seen
Like mists with the dark ocean blending.

And soon the small vessel was moor'd in the Cove,
And soon the poor Emigrant landed.”

H. V. VALENTINE.

“I WANT an honest decent girl if you have such a thing,” said a lady, to the Immigration Agent, on board of a newly arrived ship in Port Jackson. After musing and biting the end of his pen for a few moments he enquired,

“As a house servant?”

“Yes. Rather beyond that, as a responsible person, a sort of housekeeper; one that will not be above putting her hand into the cheese vat, or the beef cask; you understand.”

“Perfectly Madam.” And he mused again. “Yes, I think we have. Here Gertrude Gonthier.” A young girl stepped forward with a modest air, feeling like a slave put up at an auction mart. He ran over the requirements of the lady. She searched the young immigrant with her keen black eyes; she was a small woman, with a brown careworn countenance; the index of generous emotions, strong passions, and acute griefs, which had worn her straight features into sharp outlines, and given a restless keenness to her small dark eyes, which now turned quickly from one to the other of her companions, and seemed like burning coals; her voice was quick and commanding; she was evidently a woman accustomed to rule.

Gertrude did not attempt to conceal her ignorance of any things required, but she could and would be a faithful housekeeper; and would be thankful to receive instruction in what she did not already know.

“That is right: you will do child; we shall get along well together I see,” uttered the quick voice; and the keen eyes flashed full upon her. “Draw up the agreement sir,” she added.

The Agent ushered them into the cuddy and filled in the printed form which was duly signed. Gertrude's eyes fell upon the duplicate which he placed in her hands; she was a hired servant; the moment so much dreaded was over.

“When can she leave?” demanded Mrs. Doherty.

“At once, if you wish it.”

“Good. Come Gertrude look after your boxes. Here fellows, lend a hand and lower that trunk into the boat.” There were a few frowns, but some little coins which passed from Mrs. Doherty's pocket to theirs, smoothed the corrugated brows wonderfully, and our heroine's small effects were speedily transferred to a waterman's boat alongside.

The family under whose care Gertrude had voyaged out had been hired and taken away the day previously; and a brief “good bye, I hope you will be happy,” on both sides was passed round the immediate circle, and she followed her employer into the boat.

The deck was still crowded; some unhired, others waiting to depart; some lamenting, some rejoicing, a few stolid and indifferent, yet all desirous of quitting the confined area they had occupied for the last three, or four months.

The land of promise lay before them in all its magnificent beauty, and yet many were wishing themselves back at “home;” that is in England again.

“Oh! why did I leave my own comfortable home,” lamented one.

“If it had not been for the wife I never would have moved, I was quite contented and doing very well at my trade,” remarked a male voice.

“That's all the thanks I get is it; I wonder who's had the bother of the voyage and the children,” tartly resumed the better half.

“I'm sure I never was used to such things,” sobbed a woman.

These with the squalling of a child were the last sounds which reached their ears as they pushed off from the ship.

“Let me never hear you say that,” said Mrs. Doherty, flashing her keen eyes upon Gertrude, “don't talk to me of what you have not been used to; of course you have not, did you expect to find England in New South Wales? If you were better off why not stay there.”

The young girl looked surprised and distressed, but was silent.

“I like your commencement, I think you will do,” she added presently with some complacency.

They were at the wharf, and in a cab whirling up George-street, in no time.

“I have done my business at last! you were the last piece of it. Bless me what a many miles one walks in Sydney, before anything is done. I am always sick and tired of it, before I can leave. The country's better Gertrude.”

“Do you leave town to-day?” she timidly enquired.

“Yes, at once, my cart is at Brickfield-hill, at the—but you don't know, so it is no use in telling you. Yes, we shall be some miles from town, before we sleep to-night.” A sigh of relief closed the announcement. “I am very anxious to get home,” she pursued, “I have been absent from

Murrumbowrie three weeks; but I am sure Tudor will look after everything well.”

One of those useful, comfortable conveyances known as a tilted cart, was the vehicle in which Mrs. Doherty travelled; there was a large bundle of bedding, and a few boxes in it, otherwise the cart was empty; for two heavy laden drays drawn by bullocks accompanied them.

It was already dark when the cavalcade stopped before a low building on the Southern Road, many miles from Sydney.

A tall, rather handsome young man, came forward from a group of smokers outside the cottage, and offered to assist the females to alight. Mrs. Doherty had sprung to the ground in a minute, and turned to order the driver to hold the horses' heads, and the young man held up his arms to receive the slender English girl.

“Good evening Miss, are you tired?” he said, at the same time drawing her shawl round her to screen her from a light shower of rain, just commencing to fall.

“Thank you, a little,” replied poor Gertrude, who was mentally worn out with conflicting emotions.

The soft voice appeared sufficiently pleasing to the stranger.

“Let me take you inside,” he said, “Mrs. Doherty will see the teams in before she thinks of you.”

“There you are wrong, young man,” said the keen voice, while her flashing eyes met his gaze.

“I beg your pardon, Mrs. Doherty,” he said with a careless laugh, “I did not know you were there.”

She did not deign a reply; but taking Gertrude's hand, said, “come child,” and half whispering, “don't pick up acquaintances at an accommodation house.”

The long room they entered was lighted by several tallow candles, and in consideration of the chill evening a large fire burnt on the hearth, above which hung a huge boiler bubbling and singing; and some rashers of bacon gave out a cheerful smell and sound from the pan on the embers.

“Back at last missus,” said the cook, a thin woman with a black net cap and yellow ribbons.

“Yes, time too, Mrs. Lodges; here, take care of this child till I return.” And she departed probably to see to the comforts of her cattle.

There were three tables in the room, round one a party was seated at supper; the other two were deserted; and several persons occupied the settees and forms. A chair was placed for Gertrude, she looked up and saw the youth: he had a careless, half saucy, half agreeable manner; a hat a little on one side, and from under which hung long dark hair; a scarlet guernsey

frock belted by a strong leather strap, fustian nether garment, and black leggings, completed the exterior of the bushman.

Gertrude cast a curious eye round upon the motley company, and listened to their conversation in wonder. The personal affairs and genealogies of various families of apparent consequence in the colony, were freely discussed in one group; another, who looked like small settlers, were giving the preference to the prices of stock, interspersing the theme with a running fire of questions in the following strain;—"How did the bay mare pull?" "Did you find those stray workers?" "War'nt the roads awful up'ards?" "Jim Jones, you know Jim, he's lost the whole of his team with the disease; he's stuck at Camden; word came up to the missus to go down just afore I started." Such and such like, were the subjects of conversation.

Gertrude looked up, and saw the bushman still standing by her side.

"Is it an Inn?" she inquired.

"This! no, a house of accommodation; they don't sell spirits. Some people like to put up their drays at such places, and stay near them. This is a very respectable house."

"Indeed."

"It's not much like England, I fancy."

"Oh, dear, no! not at all."

He laughed with an air of conscious superiority.

"You're an immigrant, I wager," said the woman in the black cap.

Gertrude assented.

"You are going up with Mrs. Doherty, I suppose," said the young man.

"Yes, do you know her?"

"To be sure, and all about her. But perhaps you are a niece, or something of that sort."

"No, I have no relations in the country. Indeed I am almost alone in the world." Her soft blue eyes floated in tears.

"Never mind. You will have plenty of friends here."

"I hope so, but at present I feel very lonely."

"No doubt: but you will have a home of your own soon, if you like." The perfect *nonchalance* of tone and air, and the half laugh brought the bright blood into Gertrude's cheeks, which embarrassment the young man enjoyed for a few minutes; and then said, "I live near Mrs. Doherty's—" and appeared about to give her history, when the clear and commanding tones of the person indicated sounded at the door, and breaking out into a whistle, he strolled away.

Gertrude felt relieved; she thought she had detected a frown on Mrs. Doherty's brow when the young man approached the cart on their first arrival.

“Now then for supper; here, take this chair.” The voice was quick and kindly, and she pushed the teapot towards her companion. “Make me a cup of tea, with plenty of sugar; and Mrs. Lodges get my room ready, and make a bed on the sofa for this child.”

“Well Missus I can't exactly do that same,” said she, “for this lady here,” and she pointed to a stout, gaily dressed female, “wants the sofa.”

“Can't have it then,” tartly resumed Mrs. Doherty.

“She's a very respectable, rich lady; she could buy up half Sydney sure if she was amind, an' that aint saying nothing.”

“Don't care if she could buy it all. Give me my usual room, or another as good.” The imperative voice and flash of the eyes had the desired effect. Mrs. Lodges grumbled, and the stout lady tossed her head, and said something about the pride of some people. Mrs. Doherty looked firmly defiant, and carried the point; the supper was finished in peace, and they retired to rest.

Mrs. Doherty for the first time in her life probably yielded herself to the hands of a dressing maid, which part, Gertrude's desire to please and instinctive refinement made her execute in a satisfactory manner; but when the damp travelling bonnet and dress were removed she appeared disinclined to permit her to proceed further, and bidding Gertrude throw a woollen shawl round her, entered into conversation.

The immigrant's simple history was told with an elegant pathos, emanating from a feeling heart.

“And you did not wish to come out?”

“No, no, I thought I should never live to reach Sydney. I thought I could not quit all I was used to, and loved, and go among strangers, in a strange land. But I had no one to help me, at least no one on earth. Oh how I prayed to be preserved from it, and hoped and longed to die.”

“Hush! hush child, that was sinful, and you are pale and trembling, this will not do.” She passed her hand gently over the bright head bowed before her, as Gertrude sat chafing her feet.

“I know I thought and felt wrongly, and that made me more fearful; if I had been a strong, true Christian, there had been less danger for me; and I am very young.”

“What age?”

“Only sixteen last month.”

“Poor child. Yes,” she continued, “you are a child, more so than many a one of half that age here; it is well Gertrude you fell into my hands; I will take care of you. You will have a good home at Murrumbowrie.”

A silent prayer to the merciful Protector above, was offered up from her grateful heart, while an audible “I will do all that I can to merit your

kindness, ma'am," was her reply.

"My establishment is large Gertrude; but I have no family. Mr. Tudor is vigilant and trustworthy; but I look after things myself. The charge of the house will be yours; if you are as faithful, you will do."

Gertrude had heard Mr. Tudor so frequently mentioned that she felt a little curious, but had the good sense not to question her employer.

"Have you parents living?"

"No, ma'am."

"How so? the cholera?"

"No, ma'am: my father died first. He was a clockmaker, a German, and very clever."

"Proceed: tell me all about them."

Shading her face, Gertrude continued. "Yes, he had great abilities, and had travelled much. He told me of his own country, and of Poland, Russia, and Prussia. He taught me his native language, and made me familiar with many of the shorter pieces of its poets; for he had a good memory, and what he read was retained. In returning one night from the village, he lost the track, and falling into a quarry, received some severe injuries in the head. He never was the same again. The struggle was long between life and death. When once more he returned to his place among us, he was so changed—so—so"—she paused.

"He was cracked," suggested the listener.

Gertrude gathered the meaning of the colonialism from the look, and nodded.

"From that time," she continued, "he worked with greater diligence than formerly; but it was to make an astronomical clock, like, or rather more intricate than that of Düringen of Dantzic, so he was always labouring; for a while appearing to succeed; but when the tiny wheels were put together they would not go, or they went wrong and were useless. Then a fresh idea would seize him, and he would lay it by to begin afresh—so we grew poorer each day; and my dear good mother hardly found food enough for us; and often when I had gone to bed, she would sit up to mend the rents in my frock, or to wash it clean for the morrow. Day by day we saw my father wasting away, always growing sterner and more silent, till he would sit for hours with his head buried in his hands, and then return with a sudden energy to his work—soon to be laid aside again. One night 'twas snowing pitilessly and all nature seemed sad and cheerless, he was so very silent—so passive, and when I had read to my mother from the Bible and knelt by her side to say my prayers, he still was buried in some wild dreams, and I waited, hoping he would look up and give me his usual kiss and words of love; but he did not—he never spoke to me again!"

“Good gracious! he was not dead?” interrupted Mrs. Doherty.

“Not then; but later in the night; for he never moved; and my mother sat there in that cold room and almost in the dark; later, she thought he leaned so heavily against the table, and looked so thin and white that she tried to move a hand from his face, and—he was dead!” There was a pause, and the young immigrant wept. Presently, in a low voice, trembling and stifled, she proceeded—“They thought my mother did not feel, but hers was a sorrow that tears do not relieve. It laid on her heart and crushed the spring of life. It was God's will and she would not complain—not even in thought; but sorrow added to want threw her into a typhus fever. At first our neighbours came in to help nurse, but when they found she had a fever they all forsook us. Our Rector was a high, stately man; but when he knew she was ill, he came to see her and to pray by her; and even while she told him of her hope in Christ, and of that home He has prepared for the believer, she passed away from us! she went to enter upon that rest.—Mr. Vynen, the Rector stayed with me; he talked to me kindly and gently; and tried to soothe me; but remaining so long by my mother's bedside he caught the fever, and was very ill for a long time. People were kind in their own way, but the little we possessed was consumed in the funeral expenses—and I was sent to my great uncle at a distance.”

“What was he?”

“He was a schoolmaster, and clerk of Comb Ending, a pretty little village, in S—; and there I was brought up, first as a scholar, and afterwards helping him with the girls, and overlooking his little household concerns.”

“How came he to part with you?”

“I do not know what led him to do so; he was very eccentric; and perhaps—perhaps, he thought it might be for my good.”

Mrs. Doherty looked keenly at the speaker, and rightly appreciating the delicacy which bade her screen the wanton cruelty of the avaricious old man, gave her an approving look.

The dialogue had extended over some two or three hours, and the clock in the adjoining room struck ten.

“Get to bed child,” said Mrs. Doherty drawing out of a basket some memorandum books, which she commenced to study.

Gertrude obeyed unconscious of the keen eyes that fixed their gaze upon her as she knelt reverently, to offer up her evening prayer; or that those eyes had wandered from the account book again to read the thoughts passing through the smooth guileless brow where she slept; nor did she know the power of that drop which rolled down her cheek, as in dreams she pursued the conversation of the evening.

During the last of their journey, the jealous care and eagle eyed vigilance with which Mrs. Doherty shielded her, often excited a pleasing surprise in the young girl's mind; she could not fathom it.

Chapter II.

It is not that my lot is low,
That bids this silent tear to flow;
It is not grief that bids me moan,
It is that I am all alone.

H. K. WHITE

“MR. Tudor was down here this morning, missus; he waited a while for you.”

“Has he gone?”

“Yes. I think he was going up the road a piece, for he said he might meet you coming back,” resumed the innkeeper.

It was the last day's journey, and they had yet some miles to travel through the bush, for Mrs. Doherty's property lay back from the road.

Gertrude shared some of her impatience, which although extreme before, was evidently augmented since she had received this intelligence. She now leaned eagerly forward, with her keen eyes searching the unbroken solitude; presently a horse's foot at a brisk trot sounded behind them. “Draw up, Ben,” said she quickly. The driver did as commanded, and the equestrian gained upon them. He was a tall young man, about six feet high, rather thin, but well built; with serious, handsome features, and a healthy glow upon his brown cheek. He smiled, and bowed to Mrs. Doherty, inquiring after her health; and she addressed him as Tudor.

“Help me down. I will walk awhile, and you can tell me how all gets on,” she said.

Mr. Tudor sprung from his horse, lifted her to the ground, and drawing one arm through his horse's bridle, offered her the other, and they walked leisurely behind the vehicle conversing, though every word was audible to Gertrude.

“I have a girl, Ned.” The speaker was Mrs. Doherty.

“She will suit you I hope.”

“Yes, I think so. She is a very superior girl, too much so indeed.”

“A fine lady!” interrogatively.

“No, no, nothing of that sort; but a real simple English girl. You are smiling, what now? I am not often taken in, am I?”

“Certainly not.”

The listener felt half angry.

“He thinks me only a servant, and despises me,” said she internally.

Mrs. Doherty asked some questions about the farm affairs, and the conversation took another turn. But Gertrude was still depressed, when at length a large white cottage with its broad verandah and prolific orchard sloping down the side of the hill from the dwelling to a chain of large deep water holes, came in sight. It was a pretty place, backed up by a range of dark sombre forest hills, breaking here and there, as if to show the superb tints of ultra-marine and rose of the distant line of mountains and fleecy clouds flying round the setting sun; broad fields from which the harvest had been gathered some time; and grass meadows spread around on both sides, and were picturesquely dotted with cattle depasturing.

“Home at length, Gertrude” exclaimed the clear sharp voice of Mrs. Doherty, as she stepped up to the cart, looking cheerful and bright.

The young girl smiled faintly, but grew grave as Mr. Tudor approached, and she hastened to descend. Her slight figure was not concealed by the dark cotton dress, which from the waist fell in full drapery and almost covered a foot about half the size of a native girl's. There was nothing vulgar in the simple form, or manners of the young stranger, and Tudor who saw her for the first time instinctively gave a respectful bow, and then, half smiling at himself, walked away, to see after the wants of the pair of fine horses, which drew the cart.

“Welcome home missus, welcome home,” cried a cheerful voice, evidently fresh from the green Isle.

“Well, Mary, back at last you see,” returned the mistress, with good humoured shortness.

“Sure thin, an' it was a long time yers bin this time any way,” said the plump domestic, apparently well pleased to see her employer again.

“There! there! get tea and away with you,” said the brisk commanding tone, “now lay down, that will do, will you eat me, down, down,” several large dogs were half devouring her, only pausing to bestow an occasional growl on Gertrude.

She stood desolate and weary, there were none human, or animal to welcome her; it was not her home; she was a stranger there, a servant, a companion for the red faced Mary O'Shannassy. A bitter cry to heaven for help and support swelled up from the lonely heart. Sad mystic human nature, over whose every hope and aspiration is written DISAPPOINTMENT, and thrice blessed Religion, which opens a vista to hopes and joys unclouded and perfect.

Mrs. Doherty meanwhile had patted her huge boisterous pets, and bade Gertrude follow her into the house.

“I shall keep you about myself, child. There, that will be your own room, at the back of mine; you will sit and eat with me, and have the charge of

the house and dairy—though I keep a dairyman; but you must rule. Tudor keeps the store key, that is the stores for the people; but you will have this bunch; this is my private store key; this—but to-morrow I shall put you into your work, and mind you be faithful. I brook no want of fidelity, that is wilful dishonesty; and if I can help it you shall never be the tool of others.” These were the words of Mrs. Doherty as she conducted Gertrude through a part of the house.

Left alone, she felt much relieved; her situation was far above what she had a right to expect—it might even be happy; still she could not shake off the painful effect of Mr. Tudor's— what?—repressed smile? She was quite ashamed of such weakness, and yet dreaded that he might use the power he evidently possessed over Mrs. Doherty, to bias her mind against the friendless orphan. He had become an object of dread to her, and she was relieved not to see him again that night or next morning.

Mary O'Shannassy received orders from the new comer with a half saucy, half familiar manner; but finding her quietly dignified, was inclined to enter into friendly chat.

“Where do you come from, and when did you come?” were two of her first questions, which being replied to, led on to “what did you come for?”

This was rather inexplicable, and Gertrude evaded a direct reply.

“Sure then an' I came to get married, an' its married I'll be as soon as I can,” was the candid confession of the handmaiden.

The other smiled.

“But suppose you should make a bad choice,” she suggested, “you may marry in haste and repent at leisure you know.”

“Not I,” retorted Mary, flushing hotly.

“People often do.”

“The craters,” contemptuously.

“Well, Mary, let us see about the dinner, that is our business just at present, I believe.”

This important task being completed, and Mary showed such an utter innocence of the culinary art that Gertrude did not wonder that Mrs. Doherty required a better informed comptroller of affairs. They turned to the house; then followed the dairy; then several bags of linen, torn or otherwise out of repair, were sorted over, and layed by for spare moments, which promised not to be frequent; and by the time one o'clock and dinner came, she had found her multifarious duties no sinecure.

Several times during the morning, when she passed a small office at the back of the house she had seen Mrs. Doherty and Tudor, apparently busied over accounts and letters, both wore grave and businesslike countenances; and when the former came in rather late to dinner, it was with a weary air,

or rather as near an approach to weariness as she ever displayed; still the dreaded Tudor was absent, and Gertrude half suspected he was still writing; *he* seemed untiring.

A few active days made Gertrude quite at home at Murrumbowrie. Under her charge the former disorder that had reigned supreme through the house gave way. Mary was more than vexed—Mrs. Doherty more than satisfied: she had an aversion to feminine pursuits for herself. In a plain dress and sun bonnet, marching round her fields, or counting in a flock of sheep, she was at home. She might have changed places with half the hardier sex, and filled their stations in a thoroughly manly spirited manner. Gertrude quailed when she heard that stern commanding tone rating the indolent, or caught a flash of the brilliant eyes: yet towards herself there was something indescribable in Mrs. Doherty's manner, an electric influence, a ray of refulgence, something powerful and undefined. Gertrude felt it, and was conscious of the support and comfort it gave her.

It was Saturday afternoon, Gertrude was busy making apple tarts for the coming Sabbath's dinner, and musing, not unpleasantly on the active life she had led since the Monday evening previous.

“Be them for to-morrow?” inquired Mary OShannassy leaving a pot she was scouring, and coming up to the table.

“Yes. What a beautiful oven we have,” and she glanced at the glowing coals and bricks.

“Them pies 'ill be could to-morrow.”

“Certainly, why not?”

“I never seed a could dinner in this house on a Sunday, that's all I know, but ye'll do as ye like sure,” and she bounced back to the pot.

Gertrude stood uncertain. The larder could already boast of one of those huge joints of salt meat which appeared three times a day upon the table, and a good piece of cold bacon purely white and red, and veined like choice marble.

“We will boil some potatoes Mary, and we have had cold meat before.”

“I mind that: but on Sunday Missus looks for a better dinner than common. Thim taters are getting low in the bin, and ye must tell the “super” to send up another bag.”

“Who?” innocently questioned Gertrude.

“Mr. Tudor sure, did n't ye know he was Misses's superintendent?”

“No. But Mary who is this?”

As she spoke, a sprucely dressed being flourishing a small cane with which he tapped a well brushed boot looked in at the door.

“I beg your pardon Miss,” with a salaam to Gertrude, “good evening Miss O'Shannassy,” with a bow to Mary. “I have your permission to

enter?" again inclining towards the former. Gertrude gave it, and bent low over a complicated wreath of paste roses she was putting round her tart to enjoy a silent laugh.

"Now get along wid ye" chuckled Mary with red cheeks.

"Miss O'Shannassy" in an indescribable voice, and the visitor seated himself on a form, and redoubled the nervous flourishing of his cane; changing the boot.

"Get along, the crater," cried that young lady, quite hysterical with laughter: where upon the visitor withdrew to the stone court upon which the back of the house and all the domestic offices opened, and throwing himself into the approved attitude for reciting "my name is Norval" waved the cane distractedly.

The interview however appeared perfectly satisfactory to himself and Mary, who scrubbed the pot with unwonted energy, chuckling and muttering something about the "Himperance of the crater." Her displeasure respecting the cold dinner vanished, and she was in perfect good humour.

Gertrude encountered Mr. Tudor in the tool house, hanging up his saddle, and stepped in to speak about the potatoes. He was laughing and watching the stranger.

"He's cracked I think," he said to Gertrude.

"Who is he?"

"An admirer of Mary, I suspect. He is Jack M'cMaster, one of our sawyers. Did he pop the question just now?"

"He only wished 'Miss O'Shannassy' good evening," returned Gertrude, laughing.

"Well! it's all the same thing I expect. Soon after Mary first came up, that big Tipperrary bullock driver you may see about took a fancy to her, and they were to be married; but Mary fancied herself slighted and reproved Pat accordingly. Master Pat borrowed my old black pony, and actually rode all the way down to the Rocky crossing place, nineteen miles to buy a gown at Dugdale's Store, and on his return presented it to Catherine Dunn, who was dairy woman, then, and sure enough next time Father O'Connor came round on his half yearly visit, they were married."

"Poor Mary!" exclaimed Gertrude indignantly.

"Mary relieved her feelings by bestowing a slap on Kate's face, and calling her a few names better not translated from their original Erse; and after that they became the best of friends." Edward Tudor was looking so bright and merry eyed, that Gertrude could scarcely recognise the grave, silent being, she had previously considered him to be.

"We have a visitor in the parlour. I saw Mrs. Doherty and Dr. Bower walking up from the Lucerne paddock just now." He politely brushed some

flour from her dress as he spoke. “Pull off that big apron—there now you look very nice” and he surveyed her with his usual grave face.

Gertrude delivered her message about the potatoes and entered the house.

Tudor locked the toolhouse and dropped the key into his pocket with a half sigh, as he walked home whistling snatches of song.

Chapter III.

We sat and talked until the night,
Descending filled the little room;
Our faces faded from the sight
Our voices only broke the gloom.

LONGFELLOW.

DR. Bower was seated in an arm chair by the fireplace, where at present no fire burnt, he was attired in a rough, and rather worn grey coat, and a broad brimmed cabbage tree hat bound over with a handkerchief, which was knotted beneath his unshorn chin, had not been removed, and imparted a peculiar old, womanish character to features which displayed a sufficient firmness to bear this softening.

He was not a young man, for his hair was nearly white; nor yet old, for the tall figure had retained its erect and haughty bearing.

"This is the young person," said Mrs. Doherty as Gertrude entered. They had evidently been speaking of her.

Dr. Bower fixed his peculiar little grey eyes upon her, and took a cool survey, while she spread the tea table.

Gertrude was conscious of an indignant throbbing at her heart, and schooled herself severely for having so much pride to be so wounded.

"Have you much sickness Doctor?" inquired Mrs. Doherty.

"Very little. You heard I suppose that your neighbour had broken his leg."

"No. Who?"

Gertrude listened, and ceased to distribute the tea spoons in the saucers.

"Down at Muttee Muttee."

"Not Charley Inkersole surely. I saw him at Lodges on the way up?"

"No, Dick."

"Bless me. I'm glad of it," said Mrs. Doherty with unusual tartness.

"Charitable, truly, how so?" inquired the Doctor with one of his little satirical contractions of the corners of the mouth; it was not a smile, it had no semblance to lightheartedness.

"Never mind. Gertrude pour the tea out. Doctor take a seat."

Mrs. Doherty seated herself with a vexed air; and the gentleman appeared to sip his tea with infinite relish. Presently she inquired:

"Is Charley Inkersole up yet?"

"Yes, he returned last night. What a flash young fellow that is."

Mrs. Doherty nodded her assent.

Gertrude thought both in a very un-Christian mood that evening.

“How do you like Australia, and Murrumbowrie in particular?” inquired Dr. Bower.

“Very much.”

Mrs. Doherty looked pleased at her reply.

Tea was always served so early, that the sun had scarcely dipped beneath the Western range of blue mountains when Gertrude left the house, to take a stroll through the orchard. A clear sharp air like a messenger who had girded himself and run before the chariot of winter stirred the young blood of the English immigrant, and lightly springing from foot to foot she ran down the long walk. By the water a melancholy toned Curlew wailed, and a flight of Crows gyrating through the clear sky, uttered their solemn caw; and on her way back an opossum ran past, and mounted an apple tree, still ruddy with fruit.

Usually Gertrude spent the evening over her needle work, and now that she had fled before the acrimonious humours of Mrs. Doherty and her visitor, she yet lingered. The scene reminded her of Comb Ending; and how dear is a recollection when the object is connected with early days, passed and for ever. It reminded her too of the inscriptions, and her Biblical studies; and with an earnest solicitude that she might not become a careful Martha amidst her much serving, she retraced with slow steps the ascending path.

“How late Mr. Tudor is out to-night” she said as half hidden by the orchard trees she perceived a horseman.

The china roses, yellow and lilac chrysanthemums, and a few dahlias, still graced the borders; and Gertrude fluttered about among the fragrant blooms, gathering a bunch for the sitting room sideboard; singing in a low sweet tone one of the fine old anthems, that the organ of Comb Ending had pealed forth so solemnly when the sun was shining in mosaic work through the arched window, above the square pew where squire Blocklock sat dozing, during afternoon service.

The moon had risen, and the clear pale rays streamed over the tree tops, and lighted her path as she turned towards the house. A shadow fell across the light, she looked up, a tall male form opened the gate and drew aside to permit her to pass out.

“Oh! is it you—I was quite startled,” said Gertrude uncertain if she was relieved that it was Charles Inkersole that took her hand, and gave it a cordial familiar shake.

“I'm glad to see you looking so well Miss Gonthier,” he said in that same cheerful easy voice.

“Thank you.”

“And do you like the place, are they kind to you?”

He never had seemed a stranger, for his manner was utterly without restraint; and when he spoke with the air of one who had a right to question, Gertrude replied with perfect simplicity: she spoke warmly of the kindness that had been extended towards her.

“Then you are comfortable,” he said with complacency. “I’m glad of that. Ned Tudor’s a stiff proud chap, but you’ve nothing to do with him I suppose.”

“No, nothing.”

“Don’t he come up to take tea and sit the evening with you and Mrs. Doherty sometimes?”

“No, never. I never saw him in the house.”

“He used before you came: but he’s so proud.”

The old gloom rushed into Gertrude’s heart, but she made no comment: the shadow rested on her path again.

“Do you often walk out of an evening?” inquired Inkersole tossing back the long thick hair from his brow.

“I never did before. I have not much leisure, indeed I may be wanted now.”

“But wait. Is Dr. Bower within? my brother has broken his leg. I don’t know how such a rider as Dick came to get such an ugly fall; but he did, and now he has loosened the bandages; will you tell the old Doctor to come down? or stay, I’ll wait and go with him, tell him so if you please. Good night Miss Gonthier,” and he extended his hand, and shook hers warmly, and watched her enter the house with a comment strengthened by a term not employed when addressing the young Immigrant. “She’s a—nice girl. What’s her other name I wonder. Mary, or Annie, perhaps, or may be it’s Victoria, as she came from England?” While the youth was speculating on a subject already well known to the reader, Gertrude had apprised the Doctor that he was wanted, and that the messenger was waiting for him in the yard.

Doctor Bower was stirring a glass of hot spirits and water, and looked displeased as he yawned. “Heigho, the beautiful life of a Doctor!”

“The horse is in the stable and the saddle locked up in the tool house by this time,” said Mrs. Doherty, “send some one down to Tudor for the key.”

Gertrude left the room to do so.

“Won’t he come?” inquired Inkersole advancing.

She explained the difficulty.

“I’ll go Miss Gonthier.” He vaulted into the saddle and took the high gate with a flying leap, proud of the opportunity of showing Gertrude his

prowess; while she turned pale with fright.

Dr. Bower was in the midst of a long narrative of the fevers incidental to some part of India, and politely recommenced when she came back.

“It was very sudden in its effects, very” he pursued speaking slowly and stirring the contents of the glass, “one moment the sailors would be swabbing the decks and skylarking.”

Gertrude thought she heard voices without but could not be certain from the monotonous tones of the narrator, “The next they would fall down powerless if—if one of your bullock drays” glancing at Gertrude “had come along the deck they could not have moved a leg—then,” surely that was the gate opening— “Then came the collapse.”

Dr. Bower fixed his eyes with a vacant stare on the empty hearth.

“Hah! it was nasty illness” said Mrs. Doherty briskly, she had heard the story repeatedly, it was the Doctor's favorite, and he always mentioned the swabbing and skylarking, and as it would appear, the not very apt illustration of a bullock team on shipboard, more especially as he always looked at some one who had no bullock teams.

“We called it the Black Jack” he resumed. There was a distant sound either a shout, or the yelp of a dog. Good gracious could any accident have happened to—but the Doctor prompted by a question from Mrs. Doherty was off again.

“It was on account of some of the symptoms, on our ship all hands were attacked on the” again the narrator stirred his glass of toddy and slowly resumed, giving the names of all the Ships on the Station at the time, and the number of victims in each. He was just about to describe the sufferings of himself and another Surgeon who were the only persons to attend the sick, when the voices of Inkersole and Tudor in the yard caught Mrs. Doherty's ear.

“Here they are now Doctor; here take your grog, why you have let it get cold,” her sharp clear voice prevented more than an occasional sound reaching the parlour. Once Gertrude heard Inkersole say “the night was as black as murder,” and then the jingling of a buckle against the stones. He was evidently saddling the Doctor's horse. Presently afterwards Tudor said something about its being a bad business, all the while Dr. Bower sat still and vacant, and Mrs. Doherty kept up a running fire of orders and questions.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes elapsed.

“Do go in and fetch him out” said Charley Inkersole, impatiently.

“I could not get him to move” was the reply.

“I will if I bring him out by the collar.” The speaker crossed the threshold.

“Nonsense, Miss Gertrude” raising his voice.

She ran to him.

“Be good enough to tell the Doctor that Inkersole's waiting for him, he left his brother in great pain,” said Mr. Tudor.

She complied and heard Charley say “Gertrude, that's a pretty name is it not?”

Mr. Tudor's reply was inaudible.

“Well well,” said Dr. Bower yawning and stretching “I must go I suppose; good night Mrs. Doherty.” Slowly he shook hands, then went through the same lengthy formula over Gertrude's little hand, and retired.

Never had Gertrude been so conscious of the loss of her mother as she was that evening, vain was it that as she crossed and re-crossed a large hole in a stocking that she tried to listen and understand what Mrs. Doherty said, her senses would wander away into a dreamy reverie, in which the treasured guardian of her childhood and the bright light hearted Charley Inkersole were confusedly blended: till she longed for the tender sympathizing bosom to rest her weary bewildered head upon; and pour out all her new emotions and perplexities. She was like the tender nestling which essaying its first flight sees afar off the hawk, and flutters to the accustomed nest and maternal wing, when lo! both are gone, and the weary thing sinks affrighted.

Chapter IV.

What is our duty here?—to tend
From good to better—Thence to best.

BOWRING.

“YOU are early” said the voice of Mr. Tudor as Gertrude paused between the hen house, and the dwelling, to view the Sun slowly and majestically emerge from a bank of dark clouds; only upon the tops of the hills the sun rested, otherwise the scenery was bathed in shade and light blue mist.

“I never lay late on Sunday” she returned timidly, unable to shake off the impression the previous evening had renewed.

“Nor week days either I think,” he said smiling pleasantly.

“I always see the Sun rise.”

“If it were not that the dew would wet your feet I could show you a spot where you could have a fine view. There, do you see that clear hill with the trees on the top, over the clover paddock: if you like such scenes it would repay a walk; you will not be wanted for an hour, or two.”

Mr. Tudor spoke so kindly Gertrude almost forgot that he was judged to be so proud; and a little urging carried the point. She set the basket of eggs upon a post.

“That will never do, the crows will have them all” interposed her companion; taking it from her hands and bearing it to the kitchen.

The clover field lay before them silvered with dew, which brushed off as they stepped, leaving a vivid green track. Gertrude held up her dress and stepped high, and in a few minutes stood glowing and panting on the green elevation.

Tudor's brown eyes gleamed with kindness, and his almost austere gravity, partially national and partially the result of early responsibilities and cares in the management of large and scattered concerns, was nearly dissipated for the time.

“Is it not worth a walk through the clover to see that?” he said permitting her for the first time to turn round.

An exclamation of delight was her only reply.

The ground fell gradually from the cone on which they stood down to the chain of ponds now alternately black with shade thrown by huge round topped Woollygums, or gilded with the rapidly spreading sun rays. On each side of the clover field and at the back of the cone was a heavy

stringybark forest, while a high distant range of mountains bounded the horizon; the clear meadows lay on each side of the house, and the huts of the labourers with their log walls and bark roofs looked as quiet and solitary as the bush: only the gay grateful hearted magpies raised their heads to heaven and poured forth a noisy cheerful song; and on the wheat just rising in delicate green blades through the black mould a flock of cockatoos, white as the driven snow, excepting their golden crests and sulphur tinted quills, had spread themselves to feed.

It was Sunday morning, and Gertrude inquired where the church was.

“Indeed” returned Tudor “we have no church, or any place of worship nearer than thirty miles; which is of course too far to attend.”

“No church!” echoed Gertrude in dismay, “and do you have no religious instruction?”

“Very little, occasionally a Dissenting Minister comes round, and holds service at some of the farmers'; and the people near attend.”

“And can it be possible to keep a Christian course under such circumstances,” asked she sadly.

“I fear Miss Gonthier,” he resumed gravely “we think too little of these things in the Bush.”

“But how do people pass the Sabbath, they do not work do they?”

“No, with very few exceptions it is observed as a day exempt from labour, the climate even here where our great elevation above the Sea places us in a keen bracing atmosphere is in summer hot, and bodily energies are greatly spent by the return of the Sabbath, and that makes it welcome, as a rest day. But you ask how it is spent; the uneducated and laborious make late hours of the morning, and devote the day between visiting and sleeping, and their employers where they cannot attend Public Service, and you understand that I speak of such Districts as this, read a little and doze, and fritter the day in fact.”

“And you—” she asked anxiously.

The bright color mounted to his brow as he replied.

“I fear I do no better.”

“Could you not, knowing so well what is right,” she suggested.

“I am not sure Miss Gertrude that I do know so well, instructors generally neglect religious instructions, when we are children, and what are we to do afterwards? Every year makes the heart harder, and colder, and more wordly, when its only thoughts are for the world; so that by the time reason is matured so heavy a burden of cares have lighted upon us that they destroy and little sense we have of holier things, as surely as those cockatoos would my wheat if I did not drive them away.”

To a Christian heart the picture was indeed dismal. Tudor continued:

“I do not mean to say there are no pious, or well informed persons in New South Wales, for there are many. Perhaps we are not worse than any country where the population is scattered and uninstructed: but I often see so much ignorance, that I quite shudder. I am a Native and have never left the Colony therefore do not know how your country folks are, and indeed our population consists in a great measure of the immigrants from other lands.”

“I have some nice, good books, which were given me by some gentlemen who visited the ship before we sailed, I should like to lend them to you, I think they would interest you,” said Gertrude.

“I am sure they would.” The bright smile rested rather on the speaker than the promised books.

“These things make me very sad Sir” remarked Gertrude as they walked home “what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.”

“Gertrude” he returned in a low earnest tone “you may do us all good.”

“I. I.” she repeated sadly “Ah if you knew how much I need guidance and instruction.” She paused.

“Yet I think we read of Jesus Christ setting a child in the midst of his disciples to teach them some grave lessons?”

“True.”

“Have we a right then to suppose any too ignorant, or feeble to be useful?”

Gertrude did not reply: she felt at once her duty and her weakness, and the tears gathered in her eyes.

“What did you think of Dr. Bower?” inquired Tudor presently as they walked down the hill.

“I scarcely know.”

“You thought him eccentric?”

“Very.”

“And uncouth?”

“I must confess it.”

“Yet he has good qualities. It is hard, indeed I think it impossible, to judge of people by their appearance, or manners. Think of the cares and anxieties that man must have borne; of the scenes of suffering and sin through which he must have passed; of the strong distaste for the little aims and struggles and appearances of life he may have contracted at the death bed scenes he must have witnessed.”

“You are eloquent in his cause,” returned his companion, smiling at his warmth.

“Hardly perhaps in his cause so much as in the cause of a class, there are

so many on whom care has brooded like a bird of prey, till they have grown unlike the less oppressed; we judge such beings too hardly; we blame them for being what circumstances have made them.”

“Yet those adverse circumstances received and encountered in a religious spirit might have proved rich blessings. But certainly we should not judge any one.”

“Nor receive the glitter for the gold; but it requires much worldly wisdom to detect the difference of being, and seeming to be. But here is the last gate, do not forget to change your damp shoes.”

“Wait one moment for the books.”

The morning's walk had exhilarated Gertrude's spirits, and yet opened up a fund of reflections. The Christian's responsibilities was a subject on which she had never been led to reflect; and insufficient as she felt herself to be for the discharge of those duties, she was thrown upon the strength of One All-sufficient and Wise.

The household was late that morning.

“There was no occasion to rise early being Sunday,” Mrs. Doherty remarked as she broke the cover of a Newspaper, a messenger having brought up the mail bag the evening before.

During breakfast, and for a couple of hours afterwards Mrs. Doherty scanned its contents; glancing down the long columns of advertisements in the Herald for very listlessness, and then reluctantly laid it aside, and strolled round the garden and orchard, and visited the wheat fields, and so on, till one o'clock summoned her to dinner. Then followed the afternoon's nap, a Chapter in the Bible, and alternate dozing, and opening a book of old Sermons which she had possessed ten years and never read through, although it passed every Sabbath afternoon on her knee.

Gertrude in her own quiet room, or on the seat under a trellis overhung by cape honey-suckle and cluster roses, read her German Bible and prayed, with an earnest spirit that made those hours both pleasant and profitable.

That evening found her cheerful and courageous for the future, so much so that she offered to sing a hymn for Mrs. Doherty and at her request followed it by several both in German and English, and found at least a patient listener to some of the Holy and Sublime lessons and narratives of the Gospel.

Chapter V.

Her whole soul is roused from its deepest recesses, and all that was painful and that was blissful there, dim images, vague feelings of a whole Past and a whole Future are heaving in unquiet eddies within her.

SARTOR RESARTUS.

WINTER advanced quickly, bringing however little variety to the monotonous life on a bush farm. Dairying was over, and Gertrude had consequently less fatigue. A new life had sprung up in her heart, and everything assumed an altered aspect, it would be hard to say she was unhappy, and yet perhaps the new life had more pains than pleasures, yet it made her less lonely. Had that throbbing pulse and glowing cheek anything to do with the horseman who just enters the yard? and flinging his bridle over a post, dismounts and approaches her with a smiling eye and lip. Most unaccountably Charley Inkersole's cattle and horses had taken a fancy to stray from Muttee Muttee to Murrumbowrie, and a world of trouble the young man took to find and remove them; it did indeed, astonish Gertrude when she thought on the subject, to know how business was conducted at home, considering that Dick was still on crutches. There was one black mare especially which nobody could ever see, and yet which Charley was always morally sure was in the scrub "somewhere," and which he was always seeking.

"Is the 'super' in?" asked he.

"No, he is on the farm, or I think he went round the Run. I saw the cattle dogs with him when he was saddling old "Don," replied Gertrude.

"He is not likely to be in for some time?"

"I don't think till evening."

"Hang it, one never can see that fellow" he exclaimed with impatience.

Now it always happened that Inkersole presented himself at the very hour when Tudor was not about the house, but after some little show of impatience and disappointment he consoled himself with a few minutes chat with the fair Immigrant, and then departed. These little scenes occurred about once a fortnight.

Sometimes no one but Mary was about, and then the dialogue had this preface.

"Good morning Mary, a fine day this."

"Sure thin an' it is."

"Is Mr. Tudor at the house?"

"No he ain't."

“When will he be in?”

“It's down at his own place he may be this very minute, an' I know nothing of it.”

“Perhaps Miss Gertrude might know.”

“Faith and she'd be after knowing it's likely.”

“Run and ask her there's a good girl.”

Whereupon Mary departs laughing and calling.

“Here yer wanted, Mr. Inkersole's wanting yer miss.”

Poor Gertrude was sorely perplexed, was it right to love this stranger? and did he love her? True he came often to the house, and sprung from his saddle to give her hand a warm pressure, and bestow a few cheerful words and smiles, but might she not be deceived? the merest stranger might have uttered the words he did. And did he not smile on every one? then she would bid her fond heart give up all hope and tenderness, and rate herself severely for indelicacy in loving unbidden; and was he worthy? was it a sin to enshrine him in her heart? and then all her fortitude gave way and she reproached herself for her doubts and wept over some treasured words or look. Often she thought of Mrs. Doherty's words “you must confide in me,” but the sharp bustling manner and fierce eyes repelled her; and she knew Charley was an object of aversion to her employer. Oh for a mother's gentle sympathy! This incessant disquietude affected her health, she looked pale and thin; and was repeatedly subject to questions from Mrs. Doherty; nor did her assurance that it was a change of climate, satisfy her. “Why child the wind is as keen as a razor, and frost lays on the ground till midday,” Mrs. Doherty would return and Gertrude vainly sought shelter in reiterating “I am quite well thank you.” On one occasion Dr. Bower was present and she met his eyes fixed on her, reading in their expression that her secret was known, she sent back an appealing look and received a virtual promise of silence.

As spring approached another trial met her; a gradual shadow seemed to have spread between Mrs. Doherty, Tudor, and herself; nothing definable, something only known to the spirit.

In the early part of the season Tudor used to come up occasionally of an evening, and sit and chat, and such delightful hours they were, when leaving all the cares and burdens of superintendence without, he became the well bred intellectual gentleman; then he would unlock the rich storehouse of a retentive memory, and pour forth a flood of sensible and amusing conversation: every line smoothed out of his sun burned brow, every hard form from his handsome lips; and the grave eyes lighted up with warmth and benevolence: yet it would appear that on the morrow he became graver, and more silent than before; as if he looked back on the

evening with regret, as a weakness that must be guarded against. Once he met Charley Inkersole speaking to Gertrude, and from that time he came no more to the parlour, and always was particularly busy when Mrs. Doherty pressed him to do so; and he began to arrange the farm affairs to enable him to pay a visit to the distant stations; that visit which had been indefinitely talked of, and postponed all the winter.

Sundry little wants had been accumulating till at length Mrs. Doherty said she must have certain things from the store; as to think, plan, and act, were the work of a moment with her, she turned to Gertrude, saying,

“You shall go child, and Tudor shall drive you in the spring cart, and you can take Kitty Kenlow to keep you company on the way.”

“Very well ma'am.”

“You shall go to-morrow.”

“Yes ma'am.”

“After dinner run down to Mrs. Kenlow's and see after Kitty; she must come up this evening, for you will start at daylight.”

“If Catherine should be unable to go?”

“Tell her I say I wish she would, I should be obliged.” She opened her desk and took out paper to write a list of purchases; when we set to work seriously to find wants, we generally discover no lack, and Gertrude found a long list of commissions prepared for her.

Catherine Kenlow was the daughter of the sheep overseer who lived on Murrumbowrie; she was a native of the colony, and a very good specimen of the lower class of females. Tall and well proportioned, with her cheek and jaw bones rather prominent, a clear skin, bright color, and dark hair, neatly and rather well dressed, she presented a far from uncomely aspect, as Gertrude crossed the threshold, and returning the salutations of mother and daughter took the proffered seat.

“I have come” she said “to ask a favour.”

“Have you now?” returned Mrs. Kenlow.

“Mrs. Doherty wishes me to go to Mr. Dugdale's store to-morrow, and she desired me to say she would be much obliged if you could spare Catherine, that she would go with me.”

“Will you go a horseback” inquired Catherine.

“No I cannot ride. Mr. Tudor will drive us in the spring cart.”

“Well. I suppose Kitty you must go” remarked Mrs. Kenlow, with a gracious air. Both mother and daughter were a little affected with genteel mannerism.

“I don't see but I can, there a'n't nothing particular to do,” assented Catherine. “And” turning to Gertrude “when do you start?”

“At day break, perhaps you could come up with me this afternoon and

then we would be ready," suggested she.

"Lauk Kitty you'd better clean yourself at once" exclaimed the mother, and the young lady retired for that purpose.

"It's a long way to go shopping" said Gertrude smiling.

"Yes now is n't it?" returned Mrs. Kenlow with a most ladylike intonation, and droop of the head on one side. "Have you been down to the store lately?"

"No I have not left home since I came up last autumn."

"Hav'n't you now, well it is a long way but you'll like a change now won't you."

"Well, perhaps I shall."

After some desultory conversation of a like nature, Catherine returned habited in a purple merino, gray woollen shawl, and pretty straw bonnet trimmed with pink ribbands.

"I shall want some money mother," said she drawing on her gloves.

"Take a pound out of my drawer, and you may as well get me a gown Kitty."

"And trimmings."

"Well and trimmings. Will you be back to-morrow night?"

"It may rain, otherwise I believe we shall," returned Gertrude.

"Don't you fret now mother if we shouldn't" said Catherine.

"I shall be very lonesome: but I shan't fret. There now, take that sovereign. Good bye. Good day Gertrude."

And away the girls started. They were about the same age, but Gertrude was much less [experienced] than her companion, and Catherine experienced a good natured pleasure in a sense of superior strength and bush knowledge.

"Do you go all round by the creek," she inquired as her companion took that direction.

"Yes, I do not know any other way."

"I'll show you then, we will go through the bush and across the range," so they pursued the course indicated.

"I do think of mother, she is so down hearted when I'm away," she said, as they paused to take breath upon the side of the rocky spur they were mounting.

"It's a happy thing to have a mother Catherine," returned Gertrude with feeling.

"Yes it is. I should be lost without mother." By "lost" Catherine meant lonely and cheerless.

"You don't know what it is to be so lonely as I am." Gertrude sat down on a mossy bolder of trap rock with her eyes swimming in tears.

“Don't now” pleaded Kitty with a sympathising dimness about her eyelashes, and she sat down too.

The girls were no strangers. Gertrude had not allowed five months to elapse in useless repinings, but had sought wisdom from Above, and then gone out among the many families located on the property; she had lent them her little library, and taught their children, and visited the sick, and condoled with the afflicted; if some laughed and others were indifferent, the majority were pleased and interested. From the first she had been kindly received by the Kenlows, and found interested listeners and students. What effect her books had had upon Mr. Tudor she did not know, she had been pleased one day by his presenting her with several religious works he had ordered from Sydney, and he had said “Do not fear to be thought a Christian. Whatever you do, do it with a will and it must succeed.”

“You did not give me half an idea of how ignorant the children were. Many have never heard of Christ, and the name of the Almighty only as a curse,” she replied.

“Therefore are they greater objects of pity. You are a missionary Miss Gertrude, these are your savages, South Sea Islanders, or Indians, or anything you like to call them.”

Yet he had not said what he thought of that doctrine which she taught, or how he valued it for himself. But now he never shot cockatoos on the Sunday, nor came to borrow the Newspaper; and Mrs. Doherty permitted Gertrude to read to her the greater part of the afternoon on the Sabbath, and she readily entered into conversation upon subjects of theology, but certainly ran off to mysteries and knotty points of church doctrine, upon which the different sects of religious persons are so sadly apt to jar, and leave the mightier matters undone.

Gertrude's superior knowledge, and her delicate frame and beauty, made her at once an object of respect and affection to Catherine Kenlow; while she found so many good qualities and useful attainments in the Australian girl, as to awake a kindly feeling, and they finished their walk engaged in a cheerful conversation, and arriving glowing and bright at home.

Mr. Tudor stood listening to Mrs. Doherty's plans with a peculiarly grave face.

“Are you in any particular hurry for these things?” he inquired.

“Yes. I must have them,” she said briskly. His brows worked with a nervous contraction he was subject to when perplexed.

“What are you debating now?” inquired she with some asperity.

“If you are engaged, one of the men—” Gertrude commenced timidly.

“No, no, I will go myself,” he said quickly and in a moment his brow

grew smooth and he called the “odd-jobber” and “Jack-of-all-trades” who was chopping wood, to come and assist to rig up the tilt, and brighten the harness.

It was a fine illustration of working with a will, an hour saw every speck of dust removed from the cart, the white awning stretched over the green painted hoops and the harness buckles as white as real silver. Mrs. Doherty however vainly pressed him to come in to tea.

“I could not, thank you. I have something to look after to-night. Don't let it be late to-morrow Miss Gertrude. Shall I call you early?”

“I shall be sure to wake, thank you.”

“Good evening then, give the cushions to Mary to air. Good evening,” and he went.

Catherine was a parlour guest for the time, except for a little excess of gentility you might have supposed it her wonted place, but when she found herself in Gertrude's little dormitory she became again the natural country girl, and had a thousand questions to ask about her companion's wardrobe, and other little possessions, being peculiarly desirous of knowing their cost, and where they were bought; so that, though Mrs. Doherty had sent them early to their room to have a long night's rest, it was ten o'clock, a late hour in that household before their heads touched the pillow.

Chapter VI.

As daylight can be seen through small holes, so do little things show a person's character.

DREW.

IT was still dark when Gertrude aroused her companion, and making a hasty toilet, started on the more difficult task of waking Mary; of course in passing through the parlour she stumbled over a chair, and knocked her head against the half open door, and that brought Mrs. Doherty out, and a vigorous shaking and calling was crowned with success in Mary's case, and she proceeded in a rather rough haired, slip shod manner, to move slowly through the half dark rooms, while Gertrude and Catherine boiled coffee and eggs, and set out the table for the early breakfast. Tudor's voice was heard in the stable, and the rustling of hay in the loft, and anxious whinnying of the horses, as if watching the descent of their morning meal; and Lakin, or "poor Lakin" as the females always called him, being of the class who have seen better days, and are known as "poor fellows," was making every effort to draw the light vehicle into a convenient place to harness up.

"Catherine call Mr. Tudor to breakfast," said Gertrude depositing a large dish of salt beef on the table. Presently he came in brushing some hay seeds from his coat, and offering an apology upon the subject.

"You will have a nice long day;" remarked Mrs. Doherty pushing the carving knife and fork towards him.

"Famous. The ladies deserve every praise."

"Yet I think you were up before us," returned Gertrude at whom he had looked.

"Probably. May I trouble you for a little more sugar: thank you. Take extra shawls, it may be late when we return and it would be well to prepare in case we stay the night."

"Eat away Kitty," said Mrs. Doherty.

"I have done. You will excuse me" said Tudor rising from table.

The girls ran into their rooms to put on bonnets and mantles, and Mrs. Doherty followed with a new requirement to be added to the list—and a Bank note for Gertrude's own use.

The fine tandem pair of Bays were tossing their heads, and stamping, the cushions spread, and the nose bags of oats laid in the cart ready for the horses' supper, and Tudor was giving a last look at the harness when they came out.

“You are about to see a new style of shop I fancy Miss Gertrude,” remarked Tudor as they went forward at an easy pace.

“You call it a “general store” do you not?”

“Yes. It contains everything or nearly so, from “a needle to an anchor!” Dugdale would tell you; not only necessaries, but luxuries, ironmongery, harness, tools, groceries and all kinds of clothing. I dare say if you inquired for scented soap, or essence of rose he could accommodate you.”

“Mother bought me some Eau de Cologne last time she was down,” said Catherine.

“Laces and ribbands of course, will interest you. I shall have an eye to sheep shears and a scythe blade; and we shall none of us be at a loss.”

Gertrude laughed at the odd mixture.

“My list will be as miscellaneous,” she said, “it is a convenience indeed to have such a place within reach.”

“We were greatly put about before Dugdale opened his store at the Rocky creek, there is Cargag's store a few miles further, but it was a poor place, and his charges exorbitant. Dugdale is very moderate.”

“A 'most as cheap as Sydney mother says,” interposed Catherine.

“He has no rent to pay, nor shopmen: his house is his own and his daughters are all the assistants his business needs: before he set up business we used to depend on Sydney, and have up all stores on the bullock drays: sometimes the fellows lost their whole team, or part of it, I have known them encamped six weeks at a stretch somewhere along the road while we were wanting the various articles which they had been sent for.”

“Wasn't Mr. Dugdale an “old hand,” Mr. Tudor?” inquired Catherine.

“Yes. Do you know his history, Miss Gertrude?”

She had not, but expressed a wish to hear it; and Tudor in compliance with her request proceeded to relate the following particulars.

“He was a “short sentence” man, and when he had served his time he came up to this neighbourhood, and hired with the Shettles' at the Wattle-tree Flats; the old pair were quite uneducated, and Dugdale became their factotum; every thing was done by his advice and assistance: it was he who wrote their letters, and cast up their accounts, and who inspected the farm work, and took the stores to the station. He was a sharp, shrewd fellow, with an innate commercial turn, and he did not let the chance slip. He bought a couple of gallons of rum, and added three more of water, and stowed it by on the dray; this was his first speculation. All down the river as they travelled he sold his rum at an immense profit; and well pleased, returned after the journey with many a pound in his pocket. Shettles' station was on the Murrumbidgee and they took up the stores twice a year; next time Dugdale took two kegs, and a “skin” of tobacco. I have heard that he

sold the latter at places where the supply of the precious weed had been consumed for weeks, at a shilling a smoke, or even at equal weight of silver and tobacco!"

"What a sad waste of money," exclaimed Gertrude.

"So it is: but yet think of the poor fellows without any of the comforts of life, perhaps shepherding, or stock keeping, away all day with their flock of sheep or mob of cattle, not a soul to speak to, not a white face to break the solitude of the cheerless bush, or the sunburnt plain. Many of them have led lives of crime, and they dare not think on the past, it would send them mad, as many a one has told me, then to come home of an evening to the pot of milkless tea, and lump of damper and beef, or mutton. Think at such a time what a solace the pipe must be!"

"You are an able advocate for smoking and smokers," remarked Gertrude smiling.

"Yet I do not smoke. I am aware of the baneful effects of imbibing a narcotic poison into the system. But I wished you to do full justice to those lonely men. These were the means by which Hugh Dugdale made the nucleus of that trade he now carries on. When the old Shettles died, the girls came into the property, for there were no sons; and then he bought the bit of land at the creek, and built the store."

"Did not you speak of his family?"

"Yes, he married a widow, with two grown up daughters, she died lately."

"They are such nice girls Gertrude, and so genteel," remarked Catherine.

"Indeed."

"A'n't they pretty Mr. Tudor."

"Yes, they are fine girls."

"Mother thinks Dick Inkersole is Betsey's sweetheart."

"I dare say you can learn all these interesting particulars," he returned with a smile, "there are clouds gathering, and if I mistake not we shall have a fall of rain this evening, in which case we must try what house-room the young ladies can give us."

They had advanced at a steady pace, and were far on their way, Tudor was an excellent driver, and could readily guide the spirited bays and converse at the same time.

"Don't you think Betsey the handsomest?" enquired Catherine.

"She is generally allowed to be so, but I do not admire handsome women. I prefer a gentle feminine appearance, the index of that holy mild influence which a good woman possesses over the rougher sex, that softens the rugged edges of his temper, and leads his soul to heavenly and higher things." He had apparently uttered his thoughts aloud, and Catherine's

wondering look recalled him, and he reddened slightly; and bent forward chirruping his horses into a brisker pace.

A cold gust of wind brought down a shower of dry leaves from the tall sombre trees; and Tudor turned to look at Gertrude.

“Are you cold” he said kindly, for she looked rather pale and grave; her thoughts had wandered away to the old subject of disquiet.

“A little,” she returned.

He folded a large extra shawl he had borrowed from Mrs. Doherty round her, with a respectful quiet attention.

“Thank you, I shall be quite comfortable now” she said with an effort at a cheerful smile: and he gave his attention to the horses again. The deep ruts and roots running across the road demanded no little skill and care.

Gertrude had filled a basket with sandwiches and a bottle of cold tea, as it was agreed that they should not stop to dine by the way; and lurching as they travelled recalled the former easy flow of conversation.

“Dugdale has studied mankind well” said Edward Tudor, when the storekeeper again became the subject of remark. “He plays off one against another, in an admirable manner: thus he will tell you what Mrs. Doherty has admired or purchased, or some famous lady, who he supposes you may know, and be emulous of imitating. Catherine he will provoke to spend in a similar manner, and I shall be sure to be shown some coat, or necktie, which none but the gentlemen wear, and which indeed he never shows to the common herd, thus you see he plays upon our vanity, while our servants are led on by our example. But he is an upright and civil man; and universally liked.”

“He will not know my tastes, nor acquaintances,” said Gertrude.

“He will soon read them.”

“Is my character then so shallow?”

“I think not” with a quiet smile he returned “but you are free from deceit or—well I must not take the liberty of analysing, but I suspect that he will not show you such things as are gaudy and inelegant.”

“Why?”

“Pardon me. I give no reasons.”

Hugh Dugdale's store was a long slab building, with a verandah the whole length of the front; into which opened several doors and windows, at one end was the dwelling house; the rest was a shop and warehouse. A small, but not short man of active habits, was busied among some packages in the verandah, and came forward to help the females to alight, as they drove up to the door.

“A fine day ladies,” he said with no little politeness. “You have had a long ride this morning.”

“And it's so cold too” said Catherine shaking hands.

“I expected to have seen Mrs. Doherty, from your bringing the cart,” said he to Mr. Tudor.

“She was engaged at home, Miss Gonthier is commissioned to act in her stead,” he returned glancing towards Gertrude.

“Pray walk in, I shall be happy to attend you,” said Dugdale; “will you lead the horses round to the stable Sir.”

A female came out whom Catherine addressed as Maria, she was a tall, straight girl, with brown eyes, and hair of rather a light hue, neatly folded round her brow; and her dress was becoming, and tastefully made.

“Come in,” she said cordially “its quite-wintery, and looks like snow; only this is rather too late for that.”

They entered the shop; or rather that part devoted to drapery and clothing, and more particularly under the superintendence of the sisters: here they found Betsey.

There was a national resemblance between her and Kitty Kenlow: but Betsey was far the most entitled to be called handsome: she was certainly taller and larger, than is strictly admissible in a truly feminine being; but Gertrude found her gaze rest upon her with no small interest.

“What can I have the pleasure of showing you” said Dugdale.

She produced her list and commenced reading, “Tin of Coffee.”

“I have some excellent, never had better, and cheap too: only a fraction beyond Sydney wholesale prices.”

“Piece of grey calico.”

“Yes, I brought up some only last week; it's well you came. I have had such a run upon it; beautiful article; look at the width; fully two yards; only perceive the texture.”

Thus they progressed. Tudor had joined the group; Gertrude met his eyes lighted up with a roguish smile more than once.

Presently a horseman rode up, and entered asking for “three bushel bags” and “horse hobbles;” and Gertrude proposed that she should select all her drapery goods under the sisters' care, and leave him at liberty to attend to his male customers. No sooner were they gone than Catherine and Maria opened up a brisk chat, while Betsey served Gertrude.

“There! it rains” was the exclamation which called their attention from the relative merits of dark purple and chocolate as standing colours in the wash tub.

“What shall we do?” said Gertrude in some alarm.

“You had better remain the night, I think it's set in for a wet afternoon, and then if you like to choose these things tomorrow, it may be lighter; now it's half dark with the black sky, and the verandah shade, you can't see

I'm sure.”

“Did you show Miss Gonthier those new lace sleeves father brought up? they are beauties,” remarked Maria.

Betsey took down a pasteboard box and proposed adjourning to the sitting room; and the customers assenting, Maria loaded herself with a case of ribbands, and followed.

They passed through a long room almost full from ceiling to floor of casks, cases, and bags, redolent of odours, among which Gertrude detected salt herring, sugar, tobacco, cheese, bacon, onions, spirits, paint, oil, and tar; besides an indefinable mixture, arising from sundry other eatables and stores. Opening from this was a small sitting room, where there was no lack of comforts, and even ornaments, a coarse red and green carpet was spread on the floor, a pretty cover lay on the large round table, a small mirror with a gilt frame stood on the chimney piece, and a red Bohemian glass vase at either end filled with the beautifully formed tail feathers of the Lyre bird, the colonial sofa was cased in a nice furniture print, and a side board supported some display of glass, intermixed with china figures in gay attire.

“I'm glad you are going to stay all night,” said Betsey. “It is not often we have any one to visit us, and it's lonesome; though there's a good many in and out of the store.”

“I hope we shall not put you to inconvenience,” suggested Gertrude. “There is Mr. Tudor besides ourselves.”

“Oh not at all, there is plenty of bedding in the store, and we can make him a shake down there, and you and Kitty will have plenty of room with us.”

Betsey brought Gertrude some books to look at, but they were chiefly of that unwholesome kind with which they who have perverted authorship into the service of mammon, inundate every land with a popularity much to be lamented; and Gertrude laid them aside.

“You do not like *romances* then,” remarked Maria.

“Not such books as that. I saw some at Mrs. Doherty's and read one but was quite disgusted.”

“Were you now?” said Catherine.

“Mrs. Doherty took up a lot just before Christmas: but she did not look them over.”

“They are the works of very popular writers,” joined in Betsey.

“More's the pity,” said a manly voice, and they looked up and saw Tudor standing behind their chairs. “Do not read these Miss Gertrude” he continued laying his hand on the pile of books she had put aside.

“We have plenty of others, here, this is Napoleon's Life: this Cowper's

poems." Betsey brought out a number of works of a different class, and Gertrude was soon deep in their perusal, while the girls departed to get tea; and Dugdale came in and entered into conversation with Mr. Tudor. Only such sentences as these occasionally reached Gertrude's ear. "I expect a heavy clip this year." "A great fall in prices." "I foresaw they would not hold, and was not inclined to spec." "Markets dull, sales heavy." "Yes I do assure you five per cent below Sydney figures." All which disjointed pieces of information were so much Hebrew to her, till at length the sisters announced tea ready, and they all gathered round the table.

Dugdale was very polite. Tudor at all times courteous to females, notwithstanding his usual gravity and even rather austere bearing: but tea, and bread and butter with currant bun were kept in active circulation, enlivened by conversation, chiefly carried on between the Storekeeper and Tudor.

"That was a prime mob of cattle you sent down last month," remarked the former.

"Yes, very."

"What did they fetch?"

"Five ten, and six."

"Very fair. By the by what a long stocking Mrs. Doherty must have, eh?"

"Her establishment is large," returned Tudor, who never seemed to like his employer's wealth to be a subject of conversation.

"But you don't mean to say she keeps up a large establishment for nothing; that we may call her stock in trade: but she makes a good percentage I know, she is not the woman to do otherwise, or you to let her. No, no, that's a stall off," and he laughed.

Gertrude saw the nervous contraction of Tudor's brows, and knew that the subject pained him: she had often suspected that there was some mystery connected with her employer, with which he was acquainted.

"Well," he said carelessly "she does make something certainly."

"What does she do with it? She makes no show, and has no children to leave it to."

"I am sorry I cannot gratify your curiosity," he remarked calmly, and handing his cup to Maria to be replenished.

Gertrude sympathised with the nervous affected composure of Tudor and to distract Mr. Dugdale's attention, enquired what he thought of the weather, and received an assurance that there would be some more rain yet.

"I hope not a flood," she said "it was dreadful to see how the creek rose last rain, and swept away the fencing."

"Ha! had you much loss Mr. Tudor?"

"Why some one hundred panels, or more, that's the worst of those

paddocks along the flat, but the soil is so good I don't like to let them idle. What do you think of these American fences?"

This question called out a long discussion upon the pros and cons of the zig-zag log fencing and Mrs. Doherty's long stocking as the storekeeper called her purse, was forgotten.

Gertrude however was strengthened in the opinion that there was a mystery about her, and she had observed that she never referred to her early life, or residence in England.

After tea Dugdale led his visitor into the store to inspect some wonderfully cheap goods, and read the papers; and the girls gathered round the fire to chat.

"Have you done much work lately?" inquired Catherine as her companions plied their needles.

"A great deal, have you seen the new fashions? They are so pretty."

"No."

"Then, just look through that magazine; see isn't that a sweet dress? I made Mrs. Jacobs one like it last week."

"Is it possible you find employment in this retired locality," said Gertrude for in addition to their other business, the sisters were dress makers.

"Yes," returned Maria laughing. "As much as we can do. Mrs. Jacobs who keeps the Black Horse Inn down the road puts out all her work; she has a new cap every month, at a pound a piece, fine dress caps: and then there's all the small settlers' wives like to get their things made "out;" and Mrs. Staples from the Wattletree Flats, and the Miss Shettles, all give us work."

"We have a large order on hand now," remarked Betsey.

"Permit me to help you this evening."

"I suppose you do all Mrs. Doherty's sewing now," said she fitting some work for Gertrude, and searching up a thimble and needle.

"Yes; did you before I came?"

"To be sure: she never does any: she told me so."

"That accounts for the number of things out of repair I found," returned Gertrude smiling.

"Betsey do you know what I heard?" inquired Catherine with a sly look.

"No, I do not Kitty."

"That you were going to be married."

"Me! what nonsense," and she tossed her pretty head.

"So she is Kitty, so she is," cried her sister merrily. "It's no use denying it Betsey, for your face tells tales."

"Well I don't care," returned she, and went on with her work.

“That's a story, for I'm sure you care a great deal,” said the other.

“Is it not to Dick Inkersole?”

“That's he Kitty. Poor fellow he is lame still, with that fall he had.”

“I have not seen Charley lately,” remarked Betsey, “he used to be down here chatting with this young lady here, once every now and then; and I did see something like a lock of light brown hair in his hand one evening, just as if it had been cut off for a keepsake,” and her eyes kindled with good natured retaliation.

Poor Gertrude! little they knew how their light hearted gossip planted daggers in her gentle heart: but she said nothing, only inwardly prayed that all these disappointments might make her holier and better; and serve to wean her heart from the world: gradually she fell into retrospective meditation, looking back to see what good she had done in the last few months; how far she had lived up to the commands of her Heavenly Father; and how her light had shone before men; if it had been with that pure steady light which would lead to Him; and had she kept herself unspotted from the world in the sense of that religion which is pure and undefiled? Ah! how little has the truthful heart to approve, how grateful is the remembrance of pardon through the Saviour.

While the girls chatted over Betsey's approaching union Gertrude sat silent, humbled, but hopeful; not of earthly bliss, but of sublimer blessings; they did not read the current of feelings passing under that smooth white brow, or that left so gentle an impress upon the delicately moulded features, and fair complexion: but they thought she was tired, and insisted on drawing the couch near the fire, and covering her with a shawl upon it, and resting her head upon the pillow, she was soon lulled by their whispered conversation to sleep; with her little hands folded upon her bosom, and her hair waving round her face like so much gold, in the firelight. Betsey bent softly over her once, saying: “What a beautiful little creature she is.”

“And she is so good too, and pious,” returned Kitty.

How little they thought that the fair girl was far from good in her own estimation; and in His whose pure eye searches every heart.

As Betsey stood watching her a large tear slowly stole from the long lashes, resting upon the cheek of the sleeper, and lay glittering there like a diamond: it was not a tear of anger, or of sorrow, but such a gentle drop as cools the air of a summer's evening, when the threatened storm has passed over, and all again is calm.

Chapter VII.

The lovers waited till the time should come
When they together could possess a home.

CRABBE.

Thy sex is fickle—

H. K. WHITE.

IT was rather late in the morning before all the shopping was done; and then with a Cart considerably heavier than when they came, they started for home.

The afternoon was far advanced when they entered the back yard; a chorus of dogs welcomed them, and a strange shrill clamour of voices. Gertrude instinctively passed her hand through Tudor's arm, as she alighted in the midst of some dozen, or more of blacks.

“Do not be alarmed,” he whispered and tightened the pressure of his arm on her hand.

“Ah miss'er Ned. Good evening miss'er. You bin down along o'store. You got bacca. Gib' it me 'moke. Poor old 'oman me mis'a” cried one, or other, gathering round Mr. Tudor, who nodded and smiled, addressing them by name.

“Ha Jemmy you there, well Mary that your picaninny Betty Betty?” called forth responses to the following effect.

“Me old friend Miss'er Ned, me native, all a same as you. This picaninny belong it to me.”

“What's this I see? Urutta, you here,” exclaimed Tudor suddenly to a bright looking young man in good European costume.

“Old Owen too much coola. I come down see Mas'r Tudor go up along ob station,” returned the individual addressed, who was Owen the stockman's assistant.

“Yes. I believe so Urutta, what make Owen coola?”

“Him bin say ‘one fat cow gone’: him bin say ‘some one took that cow and kill her’: then him say ‘Urutta you take it gun, and watch down along ob water hole to-night,’ I bin say ‘no that not do debble debble sit down along ob water hole at night.’ ”

“Think so Urutta?” said Tudor smiling.

“Me believe so Mis'r Ned. Then Owen he bin say ‘you lazy’, then he get murry coola: then I say I go up to Mis'r Ned, he too much lazy not go to station afore.”

The color deepened a little on the young man's cheek at this reproof from his sable countryman, but he said good humouredly:

“I believe so. You go up with me next week?”

“Bail Saturday?”

“Bail Saturday, we will start on Monday.”

“I go down to Jinbindoon for yarraman Mis'r Ned.”

“Yes, get your horse and be up on Saturday,” and he turned into the house.

“You must be tired,” he said addressing Gertrude.

“Not much. But what queer people; and how familiarly they spoke to you.”

“Yes, the tie of nationality is very strong; they think much of a native: but their calling me Ned, is not more than all the men do, only they do not use the abbreviation to my face. It is a common practice to call persons either by some corruption of their names, or a nick name; they all like to disparage those above them.”

“Do you think Mrs. Doherty has a name of this sort?”

“They call her “Mother Doherty,” perhaps that is all.”

“And I?” inquired she smiling.

“Not to my knowledge,” he said quickly with an expression of the eye which implied that it dared not be uttered in his presence.

“Would you like to go down to the camp and see the Blacks?” inquired Tudor.

“Yes,—I should but—”

“There is no occasion for fear; and I would accompany you. Rude as their dwellings are there is something, at least to me, interesting in the sight of an encampment. Last summer we had the remnants of three tribes assembled here: our blacks were going to have a Coroborry; and as it is usual in these cases, sent messengers to invite the other tribes to join them; and they had a grand dance: but I must not tell you about it now, for you are in need of rest.”

“When shall we go down to the encampment?”

“To-morrow at sun down if that will suit you.”

Gertrude assented, and entered the house: Mrs. Doherty was out on the farm; and Mr. Tudor left the girls to arrange and put away their purchases, which he carried in for them; and giving the bags into Lakin's care walked with a grave meditating step in the direction of his own cottage.

Catherine who had stood by while he spoke to the Blacks, remarked to

Gertrude,

“Mr. Tudor's “crabbed” I know about the cow's being stolen.”

“Do you think it was stolen, I did not understand that.”

“Yes, to be sure: there is a deal of “moon-lifting” about the gullies: but they don't often take any of Mrs. Doherty's when he's not at the station; for Mr. Tudor's so sharp people are afraid of him. Did you ever hear of his catching Tom Onus? He got him transported; the judge gave him such praise! He said he never knew such an instance of cool determination and fidelity: those were the very words, for we saw it in the paper; and some gentlemen came and shook hands with Mr. Tudor after he left the witness box. Father borrowed the paper because knowing all the parties, we took an interest in the trial.”

Gertrude was about to ask further particulars, but Mary O'Shannassy came in.

“Sure Miss” she said “an I've been wanting you bad enough. I skimmed the crame and churned for five blessed hours, and sorra a bit of butter I got.”

“I am sorry for that Mary, I thought we should have a nice bit of fresh butter, our first churning this spring; and till we get in some more cows it is no use having up John from the farm.”

“I had the churn by the fire ever since,” said Mary who had an indefinite idea that warmth brought butter, if when she had leisure she turned the churn handle for a few minutes.

“It's no use now I fear.”

Mrs. Doherty came in just then, and there were all the parcels to open, and their contents to undergo a rigid scrutiny; this occupied them till tea time, and after that Catherine ran home with a pretty piece of lace, a present from Mrs. Doherty, added to her purchases, and Gertrude found plenty to do in undoing a series of acts of Mary's, known among housewives as “upsetting things,” and “putting at sixes and sevens.”

The process of tidying up was not a little fatiguing to her, as she was quite weary after their little journey; and she retired to rest “with a face as white as a sheet,” to use Mrs. Doherty's expression.

The following day Mrs. Doherty and Gertrude each leaning on an arm of Mr. Tudor started on their excursion.

“Poor creatures!” Mrs. Doherty said, as she stuffed a handful of “figs” of tobacco into her pocket, “they have only learnt our bad habits.”

“They have indeed. Is it not a reproof to us Miss Gertrude that even when conversing among themselves in their own dialect they interlard their disputes with oaths in our language.”

“But Mr. Tudor, does no one instruct them?”

“A few Missionaries have been among them, and no doubt done their utmost to repel the flood of iniquity poured in, by the corrupt and ignorant class, who chiefly mix among the native population.— Theirs is not merely to instruct the ignorant, to say to the inquiring “behold the Lamb of God,” but they have to cope with counter influences.—Is it a wonder then that little, or nothing is done? Still an unknown God reigns above and around them—still they look on that work which the Earth Spirit in “Faust” says:

“Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the Garment thou seest Him by?”

and see not God in his works. But little private effort to enlighten them is made, so they are dying among us unheeded, and soon like the emu and kangaroo will be traditional in the civilized districts. They have frequently abilities of no mean order; and when not corrupted by white people are by no means a disagreeable race: What did you think of Urutta?”

“He is rather good looking; and what splendid eyes some of the women had.”

The appearance of the various individuals who had visited the farm the previous day were duly discussed; till the increasing beauty of the scene called their attention. They had left the cultivated fields, and entered a vale between two wooded hills, divided by the creek, which as they advanced became rocky and wild in its character; the stream was here composed of long “water holes,” extending sometimes over a mile in length, and of no inconsiderable width. Mimosas and Honey-suckle trees grew on the banks; and Sallows dipped their boughs into the water, which was bordered by bulrushes and canes: and beyond, floated leaves of water lilies like fairy islands, rich in verdure. Every now and then as they proceeded a Guana crossed their path and plunged into the water: or a Tortoise startled from its sleep on a flat rock or prostrate trunk of a tree, wriggled off with all speed, and sought safety beneath the surface of the creek. Ducks and kingfishers of rare beauty took wing at their approach; and the elegant blue Crane paused in its fishing to watch them pass; the Sun was approaching the horizon, and the light streaming between the trees looked bright and golden, as if to witness to the splendour of its source: the lengthening shadows made the woods appear dense and solemn; and as usual in an Australian forest silence reigned supreme; hardly relieved by the wild unearthly clamour of the laughing jackasses which were assembling at their roosting places. Gloriously the Sun sunk to rest among the scattered pile of clouds, which caught vivid rays of crimson, yellow, and rose, from

its departing splendour. The thoughts of the peculiar people fast sinking into a heathen grave, and soon to be no more the dwellers in the land, could not fail to bring a sombre sensation of awe into each heart. They had ceased to converse, and now walked on in silence, still keeping by the side of the stream which threaded its course between wooded and rocky hills. Solitude unbroken reigned there; and the race that had once hunted the kangaroo and emu through those thickets, and laid the snare for eels and watermoles in the creek were mostly cold in death; and the soul, the uncultured soul had sped forth on the unknown future, to stand one day as a witness against those who had taught it naught but evil. Something of this kind was passing through Tudor's mind, and he turned to Gertrude to express the thought: but checked himself as he watched the movement of her lips, and the half raised eye fixed on the bright clouds above: at that moment too Mrs. Doherty exclaimed with a shudder.

“Do Tudor say something, this gloom brings back such wretched thoughts that it horrifies me! Do talk about something.”

“Did you never find that when you wished to talk merely for the sake of talking you have nothing to say?” said he smiling.

“Bless me, three people with tongues in their heads unable to speak,” retorted she tartly.

“Will you describe the dance Mr. Tudor, which you mentioned last evening?” interposed Gertrude.

With a cheerful smile of acquiescence he began: “I will give you some idea of a far grander ball I witnessed on the Shoalhaven some years since. There were probably a hundred or more Natives engaged in it. I was staying the night with a family residing there, and accompanied by some of the members of the household walked out to see the dance. The Blacks had selected a well grassed level about a mile from the River, thinly scattered over with high and heavy timber. When we arrived only a few women were visible, squatting in a group on the ground, near a small fire of light wood; they had lying on their knees a 'possum skin cloak, folded into a small compass, with the fur turned in.—Supposing we were too early for the dances in which the women never join, we entered into conversation with them. It was a very dark night and the only light was that of the little fire before us. While I was recommending a remedy for a severely lacerated arm inflicted by a falling bough of a tree and bending over the woman's arm examining it I was startled by an exclamation from my companions. Suddenly there had started from behind the trunks of the trees various figures painted with pipeclay and ochre, chiefly to represent skeletons. In their hands they held a flaming bunch of twigs, or dry fern, which sufficiently lighted up their figures to enable the painting to show,

leaving the sable skins in obscurity. Never shall I forget the scene! it was indeed a “dance of death;” and the monotonous beating of the women on the skins, and their low chanting increased the solemnity: as it might be construed into a dirge for the dead. Their mode of dancing was totally unlike that of ours, I understood that they were new and were acquired from a visitor from Bathurst, who had been some months with the tribe instructing them. They imitated the springing movements of the kangaroo in one dance, in another they placed the palms of their hands together, and shaping the fingers into a rude resemblance of the back of the emu, held the hands before their face and hopped along in circles; then they threw themselves into a sloping posture, at an angle that could only be the result of long practice and great muscular strength.”

At this moment the barking of dogs, and shrill voices clamorously bidding them lie down announced the vicinity of the encampment.

They had left the creek and entered upon a small and clear level, among a heavily timbered forest. The camp formed of the green branches stripped from the trees around, were so arranged that each should have strict privacy, by being turned with its entrance towards the back of the one before.

The numerous lean and hungry dogs yelping round the visitors, called out all of the natives who were at home; and they gathered round to welcome them, and to receive Mrs. Doherty's presents. Little fires burnt before each dwelling, and at many roasted an opossum, or squirrel merely skinned, or plucked of the fur, and cast into the embers. A few turnips and potatoes, presents from the neighbouring farms, added variety to the supper, and the tin vessels of tea simmering by the fires gave evidence that the love of luxury had found its way into the bivouac. The skins of opossums stretched out by small wooden pegs on squares of bark, peeled from some neighbouring tree, were standing in situations to expose their moist surfaces to the influence of the air.

“What think you of such a life?” inquired Tudor of Gertrude.

“In a storm of rain?” she enquired smiling; and he laughed, while the sable beings round joined in sympathy although ignorant of the cause of mirth, and the next minute several of the women were shedding tears and moaning over some trifling causes of sorrow which Mrs. Doherty made inquiries about, in order to relieve them if possible.—

“How impulsive are these poor creatures!” said Gertrude, “but Mr. Tudor there is the cry of a curlew, and see, the sun has set. It will be dark before we reach home.”

While she was speaking several of the men who had been absent returned, for the Aborigine will on no account be away from his camp

during the dark; and the visitors started for home, after exchanging a few words of greeting with the new arrivals.

* * * * *

It must not be supposed that Mary had been forgotten by the sawyer M'cMaster; on the contrary, a week after his first visit he came again, and was declared as the accepted swain of the "charming Miss O'Shannassy," as he styled Mary. There was but one obstacle to their immediate union, for there were no cares about furnishing a cottage, such as oppress the peasantry of less favored lands. M'cMaster was a sawyer and employed in the "gullies" at the back of Mrs. Doherty's property; here he lived in a "shanty," or roof-like tent, of sheets of bark; a sheet of the same material supported on four saplings set in the earthen floor, served as a table; a four legged stool, one leg of course too short, and always falling out when the stool was moved, completed the furniture: an iron tripod, a tin mug, or two, and a couple of common cracked blue earthen-ware plates completed the inventory; for the rest the canvas ticking filled with dry grass, and the dingy blankets and rug, could be laid down anywhere: gloriously independent of mahogany and chintz drapery. The drawback however was the absence of clergy; to go thirty miles in search of father O'Connor was more than love even demanded, "so they must jist bide till he came" Mary said, which philosophical conclusion M'cMaster assented to. Delays are dangerous, perhaps the sawyer made too sure of his prize: but Gertrude and Mrs. Doherty were not a little astonished one day when Mary pale and weeping rushed into their presence, and approaching Mrs. Doherty exclaimed:

"Oh Mistress dear, save me from that man, oh Mistress dear."

"What man?" demanded both in a breath.

"That sawyer, sure Mistress dear I'd drown meself sooner than I'd have the crater."

"What's the matter now?" demanded Mrs. Doherty sharply, and with a flash of her keen eyes, "here have you been good for nothing, your head fairly turned, about this fellow, and now—"

"Sure Mistress dear I hate the man," sobbed Mary.

"You have quarrelled I suppose, and to-morrow will be all regret about it, get along, I've no patience with such folly," and she gave the girl a push.

But Mary persisted that she was in earnest and always "had hated the crater," and at length urged her Mistress to tell M'cMaster, who was without, something to that effect; which she did in these words.

"Well M'cMaster you may be off about your business, for Mary's changed her mind."

Whereupon the distracted lover went through a series of attitudes, perfectly approved in the acted drama, and finally retired; and Mary shortly afterwards was heard singing blithely, as she stoned the back verandah: this ended the second chapter of the little romance of the kitchen, leaving the lookers on rather uncertain whether “to be continued” was written beneath or not.

Gertrude saw little of Mr. Tudor during the rest of the week; he was out on horseback all day, and spent the evenings writing in the office. Mrs. Doherty used sometimes to go in, and talk with him upon what was to be done in his absence; and Gertrude was left alone with her thoughts, which too frequently turned upon Charley Inkersole; she had not seen him since her trip to the Rocky creek, and she felt a little impatient to do so: nor could she dispel a sense of loneliness, although she bustled about all day, and plied her needle all the evening.

Chapter VIII.

“Alas! my soul by passion's tempest tost,
Proclaims my hope, my love, my comfort lost!”

Saturday afternoon, rations were served out, no inconsiderable task, as there were the domestics, farm labourers, shepherds, and stockmen, to supply for a week; at such times there was a great gathering about the store, and it was in the midst of this busy scene that Mrs. Doherty came into the pantry where Gertrude was storing away cakes and pies for the morrow.

“Take this note to Mr. Tudor,” she said, “and tell him Mr. Staple's man brought it from the Wattletree Flats.”

Gertrude set down her tray of delicacies on the dresser, and took the note; a little fluttered at having to seek him in the store.

There were some half dozen bare-foot children hanging about the rails of the back verandah, and two women from the huts stood gossiping, and comparing the dirty faced little babies crowing and jumping in their arms, while a precious little rogue extracted a “cockroach,” that is a lump of sugar, from the pile of ration bags behind them.

Entering the storehouse she espied Tudor and Lakin engaged in distributing the contents of a cask of salt beef. Such of the men as were not at work were there, the “sheep watchman” waiting to take the rations of himself and three shepherds, whose flocks he guarded of a night; the bullock drivers and ploughmen whose work was over for the day; a sawyer just up from the “gullies;” Owen the stockman; John the dairyman; and several women, whose husbands were yet absent in their various employments, fencing, splitting timber, threshing, or what not; with a troop of children who had followed their parents. These were the occupants of the long room, which was half filled with casks and bags. Unwilling to force her way through the group, and seeing that the superintendent was too busy to attend her mission at that moment, Gertrude drew aside, and sat down on a chest of tea, where a large bin of flour hid her from the general gaze; presently Owen and the sawyer drew near, and leaning against a cask of tobacco entered into conversation, in perfect ignorance of her presence.

“What's that Urutta was saying about a cow being lost?” inquired the sawyer.

“Lost!” echoed Owen “lost into the “round swamp;” an I tell ye what, I oud as soon lose my week's grub as that hifer, she os the finest un I had in

the mob.” Owen was a Welshman, a tall, cadaverous, lean fellow, with grizzled hair in tangled curls bushing out from under the cabbage tree hat of his own plating, and one brown stubbled cheek pouted out with a ball of tobacco.

“Which way did she go, do you think mate?”

“Muttee Muttee, or I'll be—” and an oath fell on the listener's ears, hardly more appalling than the assertion.

“No! I did not think they did anything that way,” said the first speaker.

“There is 'nt un of the Inkysole's but is as big a rogue as—.” Owen paused for a simile.

“As yourself,” suggested the sawyer with a grin.

“Did'nt I know old Inkysole? he went blind with roguery, the willin he was: he put five of my workers into the cask, that I turned out to run, did'nt he get his cattle by “gullie raking” at the first? He got every un of um off the ranges; and then to the last he'd plenty, or he 'oud have had some of mine. I heard him tell the old master ‘I don't want um’ says he ‘tant I see no harm in it Doctor,’ that's 'to he said.”

“Yes. I heard old Inkersole was a great one at that sort of thing: but I don't myself see any harm in it, if it a'n't a neighbour's beast,” returned the sawyer.

Gertrude had forgotten the note by this time; the blood was tingling in her cheeks, and to the tip of her ears.

“There a'nt a greater cattle stealer than Dick Inkysole,” pursued Owen. “He broke his leg “moonlighting,” and it's Charley this time. 'Taint un, but tu they took, and spoilt the whole cask of beef, every bit turned bad on um, and was chucked out.” The old fellow shrugged his shoulders and shook his long frame in a smothered chuckle of satisfaction, that the marauders had not been able to eat his prime beef. His, he called it, for he had served his term of bondage, and passed eight years subsequently in the employ of Mrs. Doherty, and her late husband, and he identified their interest with his own.

“What do you mean to do now?” inquired the sawyer.

“Tell the “super,” he 'll scent um out I know. They 'll be wanting another now they spoilt that cask; but the Captain 'ill take care on that,” and he gave another of his curious chuckles, wheezing with asthma, and expectorating tobacco juice between each word.

“Owen take your swag,” called Lakin from the other end of the building, and the stockman swung away, always stepping as if he had a fifty pound weight hanging round each coarse leather boot.

The sawyer also mingled with the others, and entered into their gossip. Once a week, one or other left the deep wild glens where they were

engaged sawing, and mounted on the old raw boned short-tailed packhorse, travelled a good day's journey for their supplies of tea, sugar, salt beef, and coarse ration flour; and then it was that at this general muster every little bit of news and scandal was detailed, and gleaned, to be carried back to the dusky sylvan glen, the rude bark hut, or the watch box by the sheep folds: then were the employers and their affairs subjected to the scrutiny and detraction of persons many of them dyed in the deepest stains of guilt; murderers, incendiaries, robbers, all mingled there, leading quiet and tolerably decent lives now, but all keenly relishing any error, or deviation from the path of rectitude among those higher in life, and morally their superiors. Then too the more innocent, and indeed all, asked and told their own little affairs, marriages, births, deaths, courtships, changes of places, rates of wages, &c., to all of them subjects of vast importance, and duly noticed.

What was said and done around her, Gertrude knew not, she had laid her head back against the rough slab wall, sick at heart, and dizzy. Could it be, could her beloved Charles be a robber! "Oh God! Oh God!" she cried mentally in her agony "help me." The bitter blight of disappointment had fallen upon her confiding heart; thoughts whirled through her brain, and sight forsook her eyes, but she did not faint, she did not move, but she was stunned; only the soul desired to pray, she could utter no petition: she knew not what to ask for: but is not the desire of the spirit a prayer? and it was answered; slowly she recovered, and then hope gathered strength again, she dashed the foul suspicion from her as a falsehood. No, there were no secrets of midnight deeds of plunder buried in that heart apparently so gay and loving; nothing to conceal in those eyes, that full of life and admiration sought her when he entered the yard. Charley was innocent. He must be; yet the fire burnt at her heart: doubt had entered, and reasoning without a foundation, love however strong could not unseat it.

She rose, and walked up to Mr. Tudor, no one heard her speak but him; but he turned quickly at her low voice uttering.

"If you please Mr. Tudor."

"What has happened?" he exclaimed, breaking open the note as if expecting to find a solution of his question there.

"Nothing," she said, but her cheek was colorless, and she looked crushed and bowed down. He took her hand, saying "sit down, you are ill—run some one for a glass of water."

He led her to a box, and threw an empty sack over it.

"No thank you," she said "I am not ill—I shall be better presently."

"It is the smell of the brine," suggested Lakin.

At the demand for water a great "Irishman" who was just taking his ten

pounds of flour threw down the bag, dusting its contents over every body, and bounded off, knocking down little Billy Jackson, and flying, arms and legs hurling here, and there, as he shouted to the bystanders.

“Move can't ye, an' a lady murdered—fire an' turf can't ye get out of the way.”

Every one drew aside, such feet and fists were too heavy to be withstood, and by the time Mr. Tudor had run his eye over the note, Pat alighted with a bound upon poor Lakin's most particular corn, dashing the water into Gertrude's face which he had meant to present to her lips.

“What are you doing man!” cried Mr. Tudor pushing the zealous son of Erin away, and shaking the generous shower from Gertrude's hair, while Lakin groaned, and stood on one foot.

“Thank you, thank you, he meant very kindly,” said she with a gentle smile.

“Why did you not let Mary bring this note, it is of no consequence; nothing to put in comparison with distressing your feelings by coming among these things.”

“Mrs. Doherty bid me.”

“She should—” he checked himself, he never under any provocation spoke, or acted otherwise than respectfully towards her.

In the present instance Gertrude heartily wished that the whole party were less kind and attentive, and would suffer her to escape unnoticed.

“Lean on my arm, let me take you up to the house. Lakin weigh the four messes for the shepherds, forty pounds of flour.”

“No thank you Sir, indeed I am better,” pleaded she, rising.

Mr. Tudor drew her arm through his, and walked out, and across the yard to the back door, and then returned with rapid steps.

Gertrude ran into her room, and falling on her knees by the bed side, burst into tears. She was distracted by the revelation of the young man's character; nor could she view the practice of cattle stealing in a venial light. The broken nature of the country, the wide forests, and indolence of many persons in charge, enable the herds to stray; thus there have sprung up thousands of cattle for generations unclaimed, and unbranded. Gertrude did not know that many holding the rank of magistrates and even members of council, made, in days gone by, no scruple of appropriating these cattle, and if in driving them from their strong holds some were gleaned from neighbouring runs, that they also were made a part of the spoil, and marked with the burning iron brand. Neither did she know that many moving in respectable circles make no hesitation in killing their neighbour's fat cattle, or the stray “worker” turned out of the team, too jaded to proceed, and which had crept to some adjoining run, and fattened there: still had she

known all this could she have felt comforted, for the commandment "thou shalt not steal," she rightly judged to admit of no exception; while "follow not the multitude to do evil," was equally expressive. Only the recollection, checked the flow of scalding tears, welling up from a heart whence the sunshine had departed, and the nightmare of departed hopes brooded.

She bathed her face, and arranged her hair, but it would not do; her eye lids drooped, and her lip quivered; so she took up her German Bible and in its sacred pages found a balm, even for her wounds.

"Trust then in the Lord, for the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," was not this enough?

"For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

After ration time, when Mr. Tudor had locked the door, he came up to the house. Mrs. Doherty was scolding Mary in the kitchen, and Gertrude not visible, so he walked into the parlour, where he found her sorting out ripe apples to bake for supper, looking pale but calm.

"I took the liberty of coming to see how you were," he said.

"I am better thank you. Quite well indeed."

"Not quite, you have no color, I was thinking you stay too much in doors. If you would permit me to put the side saddle on old Don, (he is perfectly quiet) and take you out for a ride, I would walk by your side till you acquired the control of your horse," he looked anxious, but it was for her health merely; he evidently had not heard Owen Jones's communication. Gertrude breathed more freely for this conviction.

"I am much obliged" she returned, her eyes glistening with gratitude: "but I would rather not: pray forget this little paleness, I should feel it a kindness that you did so."

He bowed in silence, but looked grave, perhaps disappointed; and retired.

An hour later Edward Tudor was at home. His cottage stood upon a level, a little way up the range, where the creek made a detour, and a long deep pool of water lay immediately before and below it, an Eucalyptus, dull blue stemmed, with leaves almost black, towered considerably more than a hundred feet in height close by the building, and a few lesser ones stood at the back. Otherwise the slope was clear, till a thick belt of wattles shut in the top of the range. From this position the superintendent's eye could take in the whole farm; the huts lay just below him near the water, in a long straggling line, terminating with the high fenced cattle yards, stock yards, and grey wooden barn: across the creek lay the cultivated fields stretching away to the side of the residence, and beyond it.

Though the walls of the cottage were wooden it was superior to the

ordinary huts; the windows were glazed, the door painted, the floors boarded, and the walls white-washed. The furniture was perfectly plain; a square cedar table, a few chairs, a colonial couch, with cushions and palliass, a lock up book case, with pigeon holes for papers; these were all in the sitting room, which Tudor paced with rapid steps, his brows knit, his arms folded, and his cheek pale as the bloodless lips which were drawn in upon the set teeth: something more than ordinary had agitated him; something beyond a drunken shepherd, a "rushed flock," or an insolent idler. Lakin who waited upon him, and was his hutkeeper, brought in the beef and damper, and butter, and the tin pot of tea, and spread the table for the evening's meal.

Tudor paced slower and calmer in his presence, but did not evince any inclination to partake of the supper.

"If you please Sir, the tea is ready," remarked Lakin, with that alarmed look he always wore. The brief "very well" satisfied him and he departed.

Tudor continued to pace up and down; sometimes his thoughts took words, and he spoke aloud unknown to himself.

"I would rather any hand than mine must deal her this blow; he, he, I could send to Cockatoo with little regret—but she loves him. Oh! that some other had been found to do this, she will abhor me—" he strode on quicker, then suddenly stopped "Has she already any suspicion? was this the cause of her sudden illness! Owen would not tell her—Pshaw! why should he, he has not seen her loving earnest eyes rest on that fellow, he has not seen her whole frame lighted up with pleasure, and become buoyant at his smile. Why should he know she was interested in him; him above all people, who no more values the love of such a woman, than if she were a factory wench! Who does not know, who cannot know what a treasure is concealed in that fair little form. How can he understand the fine shades of her pure guileless character? A fellow scarcely beyond the blacks in culture—who would marry her and make her his dairy woman, and wear the shirt that had wrung the skin from those dear little hands to wash. I can save her from that, at least, but how will she thank me for it?" Sufficiently painful was the latter reflection, and when he had fairly spent his strength, he began to reflect upon the propriety of not letting Lakin exactly know his thoughts and feelings; and therefore seated himself at the table, and made a show of taking supper but the slice of meat went into his great cattle dog's mouth, and the contents of the cup of tea out of the window, and Lakin was summoned to remove the things, really untouched by the person for whom they were prepared.

"Did you give my horse a mouthful of hay, Lakin?"

"Yes sir."

“I shall have to go out this evening; you can leave the door unbolted.”

“Yes sir,” said Lakin with alarm depicted on his countenance.

“And Lakin, saddle Don as soon as you have had your supper.”

“Shall I saddle him now Sir?” he looked perfectly horrified.

“No, when you have supped.”

Lakin retired. Tudor opened his bookcase, and took down a little volume of devotional exercises which Gertrude had lent him, and read till informed his horse was saddled.

To spring into the saddle was the work of a moment. The shades of evening were gathering round, and he broke out into a moderate canter, taking a circle to avoid observation from the huts; and ascended the range at a gentle pace. Whatever indecision had disturbed his purposes previously the lines of his countenance had now settled into their usual expression, with some additional firmness.

Edward Tudor was very young when he entered upon the command of Mrs. Doherty's property; he came, by the dying request of the late Doctor Doherty, but though that request came penned by the hand of the widow, and impressed with the vivid passionate feelings of her nature, it was not in his power to respond immediately. He was the eldest son of an orphan family, and his mother required his care; nor did he leave home till he had established his brother in the place he had filled for three years, from the period when he came home from school a long legged thin boy, with a strong mind, and a character that ripened under this early responsibility into energy and firmness, not untinged with a dash of melancholy and a certain haughty manner which had crept upon him in the days of boyhood, to repel the advances and temptations of those who would have drawn him into the paths of sin; or made him a tool in their hands. When after some six weeks delay the new superintendent did present himself, a revolution in affairs took place; he found the ripe wheat cut and left in the fields during a very wet season, and the long green shoots of the sprouting grain matting the sheaves; “slip rails” had been left down, and a splendid lot of brood mares wandered in, and partaken so heartily of the wheat as to cause the death of several, while their foals perished of want; the hay stacks were unthatched; the sheep dwindling away under the attacks of native dogs, and the pilfering of shepherds; the cattle were wandering over the country; and the distant stations where the news of Dr. Doherty's demise had just reached, were rejoicing in the prospect of gleaning a rich harvest, as the widow was certain never to trouble them.

It was afternoon when Tudor arrived at Murrumbowrie, and he summoned all the farm servants together; explained his position briefly, and concluded, “I shall require a new leaf turned over, you must work well;

if there's any man here unwilling to do a fair day's work, and wishes to shirk his duties, let him say so, and I'll pay him what is due, and send him about his business." None responded to the call, and one or two muttered something about being ready to do fairly by the missus, and him. "Very good," he returned, and the assembly retired with expressions not loud, but deep, of indignation against the "young un, who was doing it with such a high hand."

Hardly less astonished was Mrs. Doherty, who exhausted by violent grief entirely unsubdued, was worn down by an accumulation of disorders. Tudor requested to see her, and was told she could see no one.

"Was she in bed?" "No." "Then say I must see her; and should be greatly obliged by her allowing me to do so now."

The messenger infected with the general awe, repeated the command, rather than request; and Tudor carried his point. What he said it matters little, but ultimately they were seen pacing up and down the long walks in the orchard; in a few days more Mrs. Doherty resumed her usual active life, and three weeks later found the homestead in tolerable order; then like a flash of lightning the youth appeared at the far stations, and displayed the same vigorous management as before. Having oiled, and set in motion his extensive machinery, Tudor proved thoroughly competent to superintend, and make it profitable withal. That such a man had enemies was not a matter of wonder; he never swerved from the path of rectitude, nor suffered others to do so as far as he could prevent it, his zeal and industry were untiring, and the lazy received no quarter; yet the heart had found no resting place in religion, and to "serve his generation" had been his only ambition till he had met with Gertrude Gonthier, his conscience then whispered a new suggestion; it pulled down the proud structure of works he had raised on the altar of selfrighteousness; and it told him why even duties performed in a wordly spirit leave such an aching vacuum in the heart.

* * * * *

Dashing through the high daviesia and peppermint tree scrub, Tudor had reached the further boundary of Mrs. Doherty's land, adjoining Muttee Muttee; here among a thick mass of wattle and fallen timber he dismounted, hung up old Don's bridle, and silently approached the brow overlooking the Inkersole's farm; the moon was bright and full, but frequently obscured by a damp, thick scud, passing rapidly across the sky, and it was some time before the silver gleams rested on the group of white buildings below; then plain as in the light of day he saw the brothers catching their horses in the stubble paddock, with a great savage deep-

mouthed bulldog stealthily creeping at their heels.

A deep low "Ha!" escaped the watcher. The information of Owen Jones had led him to anticipate their presence that night, and he had protracted his ride to ascertain where the nearest mob of cattle were reclining, or "bedding" for the night; and as he had seen their sleek well filled skins shining in the moonlight, he had readily marked which would be the victim.

Again the moon was obscured, and every faculty centered itself in hearing. After such a length of time had elapsed that he feared he had chosen a wrong place, the distant tread of horses' feet greeted him, they were shod horses, and their regular pace showed them to be under guidance. On they came, only a slight clinking of the iron shoes against a stone, or the snapping of a stick enabled him to judge their progress. Presently a low hungry sound between a whistle and a whine apprised him of danger, and he sprung into the trunk of a fallen tree striking down the dog with the leaded handle of his whip.

"Bully's after a 'possum" said the voice of Dick Inkersole.

"Nonsense, it's a man. I know his whine. Down Bully."

The cry came just in time to arrest the second mad deadly spring, and the well trained beast obeyed the low whistle, and fell into the rear of the horsemen.

"Who's there?" demanded Charley. The moon breaking out from under a cloud rendered an answer unnecessary.

"What, Ned Tudor!" cried both in equal astonishment, and as he descended with a cold look, Charley recovered sufficiently to add.

"Good evening Mr. Tudor, out 'possum shooting?"

Tudor bit his lip, and briefly said "No."

"It's hardly a good night for that," remarked Dick.

"More fit for larger game," suggested Tudor eyeing their fowling pieces.

"There an't any large game about here that I know of, excepting paddy melons, foresters are scarce now," remarked Charley with innocent audacity.

"Neither of us are deceived I believe Charles Inkersole, by this child's play," said the young man coldly.

"What do you mean?" demanded Charley reddening.

"What business have you out here at eleven o'clock at night, with that bull dog, armed with guns, and butcher's knives?"

"I suppose we may pass through the bush. I did not know there was a rule against that."

"That is no reply to my question."

"What are you doing here acting the spy upon us?" thundered Charley.

“I hope Mr. Tudor you don't think any harm of us. I assure you we were only crossing over the run, going down to the river for a little duck shooting in the morning,” remarked Dick, who was of a pacific temper.

“With a bull dog and butcher's knives,” suggested Tudor in a tone of withering coolness.

“I know what it is,” roared Charley coming up close to the other, and leaning forward with flashing eyes, “you thought to catch us moonlighting, and to have had the ‘satisfaction’ of sending me to Cockatoo. You'd like that would not you?”

Tudor grew very white, but said nothing.

“I know why you want to get me out of the way,” pursued Charley.

“Shut up Charley,” interposed Dick, but the younger Inkersole was in no humour to be checked, and shouted.

“I won't.”

“I caution you both,” returned Tudor, “I know what I am about, I have information you are not conscious of; you have defeated me this time, but you won't always; don't be too boastful Charles Inkersole, you may not always have such good luck as you have had to-night,” and slowly he turned away to where his horse stood patiently awaiting him.

“Had Bully caught him he would have been a dead man this minute,” said Dick.

Charley was in too great a rage to do otherwise than mutter with an oath, that he wished he had, and Dick understanding his brother's humour contented himself by telling Bully that but for him they would have passed Tudor by unseen, information the creature appeared to understand and relish, for he wriggled his body and short tail, and smacked his long lips with unmistakeable satisfaction.

Chapter IX.

A wedding dance—a dance into the night,
On the barn-floor, when maiden feet are light.

ROGERS.

The effects of the night's rencontre at the farm, was, that Tudor announced he should not leave for some little time.

Gertrude still looked so unwell, and was so evidently drooping that Mrs. Doherty proposed sending for Dr. Bower, which she opposed with an energy quite unusual in her. That evening as she came along the back verandah she heard her name pronounced; she had no need to turn to know who had spoken. It was Charley Inkersole.

“Miss Gertrude,” he said, “I have come to bid you good bye.”

The words riveted her to the spot.

“I shall not see you again for some time.”

“Where are you going?” she faltered.

“To the Abercrombie.”

“Is it far?”

“Yes, some distance; we have a cattle station there.”

“Has not Mrs. Doherty also!”

“What? the Springs, and Round Hill you mean? Yes, she does run some cattle up that way, but it's not on the river, it's on the ranges higher up.”

Gertrude longed to speak a word of counsel, but she had half determined to speak no more to him; yet he was going away, perhaps for ever.

“How bad you look,” he said in some alarm, as she approached nearer to the rails, “why surely you've not been ill?”

“No. Is not the place you are going to dangerous?”

“Not at all; a little mountainous, don't be downhearted Gertrude, I shall be back next summer. I know what a proud cold fellow Tudor is; don't you mind him, nor what he says of me either. Does he ever speak of me to you?”

The sudden question made her start.

“He surely speaks to me, and never mentions you.”

“Don't he like you then?”

“I do not know; he is always very kind to me, but he rarely comes into the house, and I never go out much.”

“Well it's so much the better; there's nothing he could say would give you any pleasure.”

Gertrude thought of the happy evenings in the beginning of the winter, but did not mention them.

“Well,” he said, “I must go, but I want one favour,” he bent over the palisade and pressed a kiss upon her pale cheek, and laughed at the burning red that overspread it.

“Good bye, good bye, dear Gertrude.” He hurried across the yard, mounted his horse and was gone.

Gertrude wept bitterly; the first parting, how bitter; doubly so in her case, because her emotions had to be concealed, and her conscience reproved her for her love, and that often as she had seen him, she had never spoken on sacred subjects to him: for Charles Inkersole was one of those light hearted, irreverent sort of persons, to whom it seems impossible to mention holy and sacred themes, lest the gay spirit should treat them as subjects of mirth; she knew it and renewed the old struggle. Yet might he not change? Was there not room for repentance in him? And then he was so young!—What a subtle reasoner is love! Gertrude wore out the night in tears; and was really ill next day.

Shortly afterwards Tudor started with Urutta the black, for the stations; and the farm seemed gloomy and deserted without him.

Every member of a small household possesses an intrinsic value, unknown in larger communities; if clouds invade the little circle there is no one to fill the broken link, the gap remains, and that “one is not,” is constantly sounded by every object—or if one is absent the place cannot be filled temporarily—business may progress as usual; morning and evening finds man at his toil; and seeds are sown and crops grow golden; yet there is the aching void—Tudor was not only the superintendent and general adviser at Murrumbowrie, but he was unquestionably the best informed, and naturally the cleverest of the whole party—his was one of those deep vigorous minds which never rest satisfied with a smattering of knowledge; who through patient and painful toil surmount every difficulty, and finally stand above the conquered foe victorious. Every body pronounced him a sensible young man; and very few had any idea of how much he knew, how deep and varied his attainments were; for sound knowledge never is apparent on the surface; the presence of a shallow stream is ever known by bubbling, while the river flows without noise, however “Character is power” and as every will in a great measure therefore succumbed to his master spirit, when it was suddenly withdrawn the remaining persons were left helpless. “I cannot tell: Tudor is not at home.” “It cannot be done, now Tudor is absent,” was the burden of every speech.

Gertrude had early observed that Mrs. Doherty kept no society, Dr. Bower alone visited her; some persons came on business, many indeed

called to see Mr. Tudor about strayed cattle, or for the sale of crops, or other matters, but when their business was arranged they departed, having entered no where but the office—once she enquired “do not people visit each other in this country?”

Mrs. Doherty started, and fixed her piercing eyes on her companion's face—“What prompted that question?” she said severely.

“I was only surprised at—” stammered Gertrude in alarm.

“At what?”

“At home people seem so much more sociable—”

Mrs. Doherty was seated at the window with a lot of cheese cloth in her lap, which she had been cutting up for the dairyman, for sometime previous to Gertrude's remark she had been gazing at the window, and playing with her scissors abstractedly; and she now returned to her employment without taking any immediate notice of Gertrude's remark. After a while she looked up and spoke; and Gertrude saw she had been in tears, and that her cheek was pale.—“No child,” she said not angrily, but very sadly, “we have no visitors.—There is a certain class I might mix with, rich, showy, coarse persons— those I will not—and for the rest, they are very exclusive. It is right, it must be so.”

“I suppose so many have been convicts, or related to criminals, who now are in respectable positions,” returned Gertrude.

The voice that spoke was subdued and faint, as Mrs. Doherty answered “Yes.” Then after a pause in another tone resumed; “in Dr. Doherty's time we had many visitors, gentlemen principally, indeed entirely—travellers, and persons bringing out introductions from home—we had such persons here by the week together, sometimes for months—waiting till something offered suitable for them, or gaining experience, if they were going to settle.—They came strangers to us, or they had known Dr. Doherty when they were boys, and run up since he left home—now many of these are influential men, and occasionally in Sydney we meet, and pass without recognizing; these sort of obligations are soon forgotten Gertrude, and they don't like to remember that there was a time when they were glad to eat at our table; and perhaps to borrow money of my husband, to start them in life—but” she added fiercely “I want no patronage from any one.”

Presently Gertrude asked if all had been ungrateful.

“No, some I dare say would prove the reverse if I needed it: but it is best not to try one's friends; child—it is best to look to strangers for favors, a slight from a friend wounds deeply—'tis more easily endured from strangers.—Did you ever hear of young Houghton?”

“No, never.”

“He was a fine boy, a noble, generous fellow, who had worked his

passage out here before the mast; his mother was a widow, with a large family, all girls but this one; and they were struggling with poverty, so the boy came out, thinking to get into some situation, when he could send home for his friends. His father had known Dr. Doherty, so he made his way up here. It was evening when he came, tired and dusty, for it was the middle of summer, just about harvest time. Well, he stayed with us a week, and then another, and then the Doctor proposed that he should stop and learn to superintend (Tudor was not here then) and he did—he was a high spirited, goodnatured lad, but impulsive; and when once he took a whim nothing could turn him—he was not like Tudor. I never knew one like *him*, child. You could not reason with Adam; he never admitted an error in his own judgment, I used often to argue with him to no purpose.”

Gertrude thought that was not so very surprising, for Mrs. Doherty's arguments were peculiar.

“We gave him money to send for his mother and sisters; and as the time came round for a letter to arrive, announcing their receipt of it, and at what time he might look for them, Adam was all impatience. It was autumn, and the incessant rains delayed the mails, and prevented our sending for letters: but rain or not, he would go. Well at last the rain fell day and night for a week; such rain! the creek rose, and roared along in great waves, carrying down large trees; there were three cows drowned that flood; and Houghton would go for letters, I begged him not, and he only laughed; Dr. Doherty forbade him the use of a horse; thinking to stop him, but he turned proudly on him and said he could walk; so finding he could not move him, he made him take a fine old hunter, a spirited powerful horse. He could not reach the Post Office without crossing this creek, and it was a perfect river in width; and pouring along horribly. Oh how I begged him to think of his mother, and not venture into such a torrent. “I am thinking of her Mrs. Doherty,” he said. I told him he would be drowned, but he laughed, and said: “no fear.” He had never been on a horse till he came here, and he rode badly. Did you ever notice how elegantly Tudor sits a horse? Scarcely anything can throw him, but Adam was incessantly falling, though proud of his riding; and not to be convinced, he could not sit a horse when swimming; he plunged in at a part where the stream was broad and shallow, excepting in the channel of the creek; but the water ran so strong that he was borne down, he could not guide his horse, and I think he grew giddy with the rush, and light on the water, for he suffered the horse's head to turn with the stream, instead of keeping it against it; and in a few minutes he was in that turn where the high woolly gums grow; the water has cut out a deep bed there, and it being confined between the steep banks was pouring along in all its force, in a moment he was swept from his seat;

still he grasped the horse's bridle, and the poor animal was washed close to the bank, and struggled to get out, but could not; so they went down the stream together. My husband and the men were on the bank throwing ropes to him, and trying every plan in vain; he was bewildered and unnerved; and presently the horse struck him with his foot, or something, he let go, and Jupiter was lodged on the bank, where he had footing, and after a while they rescued him."

"And the young man?" inquired Gertrude breathlessly.

"Yes, they found him too—miles away, covered with mud, and torn with branches of trees and gravel." Her companion wept—presently Mrs. Doherty continued, "He was buried at a township thirty miles from here; it being the nearest consecrated ground."

"And his mother?"

"She arrived a few weeks afterwards. My blood creeps when I think of that woman; and the way she said "he was my only son, and the image of his father," as if she lost both in him. Dr. Doherty did what he could for them, and after a while the girls married; and by one thing, or other, they were scattered. I don't know exactly where any of them are now."

Always after this time Gertrude could not look at the creek without thinking of the widow's only son; and she fancied the trees were peculiarly gloomy, and the water cold, and cheerless just there.

* * * * *

Mrs. Doherty spent the greater part of the day out on the farm, and Gertrude ruled the house alone, and found the solitude particularly oppressive: perhaps so did Mary, for she used to make the dusting of the parlour a long job, and took a great fancy to arranging the glass on the side board, when Gertrude was in the room.

"It's very lonesome," remarked Mary on one of these occasions, carefully wiping the dust from a decanter stand, as she spoke.

"Do you find it so?"

"Sure Miss an' it's yourself looks as if ye did."

"Well Mary the weather's getting so warm, and pleasant now, we shall soon be cheered up again."

"I want you to speak a word for me to the Missus. His rivirence is at Wattle-tree Flat, an' he'll be up here to-morrow evening."

"So I heard."

"Faith an' on my soul I've been fretting an' miserable, an' I've only regretted it once, an' that's ever since quarreling with the crater."

"Who?"

"Why sure ye don't forget Jack M'cMaster, isn't it day an' night I've been

fretting and grieving about him, wearing myself away to skin an' bone, jist like yourself and sure, Miss dear, ye need not redden that way, for it's myself knows the heartsickness ye have, an' it's no call ye have to take the Doctor's stuff, and so I tould Missus, when she said she'd send Lakin, poor crater, for the ould Doctor."

"Oh Mary!" cried Gertrude much distressed.

"Trust me an' I didn't say what it was as ailed yer, but I know by myself," and Mary raised a plump red hand to a face like a full blown damask rose. If ever woman thrived and fattened on blighted love, it was the charming Miss O'Shannassy.

"But what can I do for you Mary?"

"Jist spake to the Missus to tell his rivirence that Jack an' I wish to be married to-morrow."

"Oh! Mary do think of what you are about. You said you hated M'cMaster, and now you wish him to be the partner of your whole life, do reflect; perhaps he may not wish it now."

"Sure Miss, Pether tells me he's willing, an' as to thinking, I've thought, an' thought till me head's like to fall off wid bewilderment, an' if ye'd jist ask the Missus to lend us the loan of the wool-shed, it would make the finest place for a dance, an' we'd have a little fun after all our sorrow."

"I suppose I must see what can be done. But how will you send M'cMaster word?"

"He'll be up to-morrow, for Pether brought word so, an' may Heaven bless ye for your kindness, an' I hope it's soon we'll be drinking your health, and ye side by side wid yer own sweet-heart, bless him, wid his bright face."

Gertrude was painfully red, and in self defence obliged to promise to do her best, and send Mary away. The case was perplexing enough, for not only would Mrs. Doherty be seriously displeased, but Mary's marriage would leave them without a servant, and Gertrude felt weak and unwell, and quite unequal to any extra fatigue. Nor were her surmises unfounded. Mrs. Doherty took Mary to task in a manner enough to put to flight a whole host of Cupids, but finally declared that such a fickle, changeable thing, might wed a black if she liked, and dance in the wool-shed afterwards. Away bounded Mary, and presently blithe as a magpie, her voice was heard singing one of those inexplicable airs so dear to the ploughman and housemaid, and which no one else can find the tune of. Biddy M'cGrath and Margaret Coolan were enlisted from the huts, and the three pairs of strong arms had soon swept the large wool-shed, festooned the walls with green boughs, laid long planks on stones and blocks of wood, to form benches at one end, for the weary to rest on; and built up a

long table for refreshments; and it was whispered about that Mary had long been contemplating this event, for she produced sundry pairs of white cotton gloves, and white ribbons, for favors, whilst a green *muslin de laine* dress came out of the recesses of her box, and a pair of glazed shoes, and snowy hose; even a veil was turned up, but then Mary had no bonnet, for she never wore such a thing, and so some ingenious person proposed that the veil should rest upon her head without a bonnet, which was finally agreed upon. Every thing being thus in readiness, the arrival of the Reverend Patrick O'Connor became a subject of unusual interest. Never was the worthy man met with such officious attentions, and such protestations of affection. He was a short, very stout man, so much so as to be a perfect caricature of corpulent humanity; and he came into the house panting and puffing alarmingly. Mrs. Doherty welcomed him with a smile.

“We have some work for you,” she said in her own brisk manner.

“Indeed Madam,” he replied in a strong Irish accent, “and what may it be?”

“Why Mary here is tired of freedom, and wants a Master, so you must tie their hands.”

“Indeed Madam, my fatigue will prevent my attending to the matter at present, or I should feel great pleasure for your sake in so doing.” His Reverence had sunk into a chair, and was passing a large red handkerchief over his heated brow.

“Thank you. The fact is, the girl has changed her mind so often I doubt if the thing were put off, whether she would have M'cMaster by the morning.”

“That is a serious charge, you will please to give me some reason for such an opinion.”

Mrs. Doherty did so; and so severely did the worthy father view the case, that he insisted upon the marriage being put off till the following day.

“In the meantime, if you could oblige me with a glass of milk, I should feel all the better,” he concluded.

Gertrude ran for the desired beverage, and Mrs. Doherty begged to add a little French brandy to take off the chill; and the good man tasted and relished, and spoke a few words, and tasted again, and so on, till no inconsiderable quantity of the mixture had vanished.

Mary meanwhile awaited the appearance of the visitor, and when Mrs. Doherty led him out to see some improvements contemplated, the girl rushed forward, and flinging her arms round his feet knelt before him, praying him to perform the ceremony.

“Leave go—be gone woman,” ordered he vainly.

Mary was backed up by a group who had assembled to witness the

marriage; among them stood the disconsolate bridegroom, and vainly his Reverence struggled to shake her off. Along the yard shuffled father O'Connor purple in the face with indignation, and fatigue, and after him dragged Mary, clinging to his feet, and kneeling, stopping when he stopped, and moving when he moved. The scene was becoming past endurance to the sufferer, and sundry titters had swelled into scarcely suppressed roars of laughter, when at length the victim gave a promise; Mary sprang up and bounded away, and, in less than five minutes afterwards, the whole party assembled in the wool-shed, where the last scene of all romances was enacted, namely a marriage. Then there was a dance; such a dance! no swimming in lazy ease through elegant saloons, but real, active, violent exertion, such as a lot of spirited horses at play take: jumping, bounding, and stamping, while from time to time a visit to the two-gallon-keg of rum, smuggled in by slyest means, gave an additional impetus to their glee.

Scarlet and yellow handkerchiefs fluttered on poles for flags, and old shawls were spread out as streamers. When evening came tallow candles, stuck in the necks of black bottles, illuminated the scene, which presented a subject fit for the pencil of Cruikshank in his happiest moments.

In the parlour, the ladies and their visitor enjoy a little quiet conversation.

The Rev. Patrick O'Connor is well versed in the genealogies of the old colonists: a subject always affording amusement to the long resident, and Mrs. Doherty and his Reverence astonish Gertrude by their acquaintance with, not only the principal stem and branches, but also the twigs and endless saplings of the genealogical tree; each in his, or her turn, prompting the other by "Was not she one of old Such-a-one's daughters?" "Did not he marry one of the Smiths?" "Was not her sister connected with the Browns by marriage?" "Was she a 'Red Rover?" "The old man was a 'Veteran' I think." On these little headings such a chapter opens out, as that most fertile brained writer of three volumed romances, G.P.R. James, might envy.

The little excitement Mary's wedding had caused on the farm, passed over shortly, although it was universally declared an "illigant" affair. We rather suspect a dance in a wool-shed, or barn, is more enjoyed than the most *recherche* ball among the *élite*. But as even a honey-bee has a sting, and the rose a thorn, and no sweet thing is without some bitterness, so the departure of Mrs. M'cMaster, as every one delighted in calling Mary, left the kitchen empty. Biddy M'cGrath, who had promised to fill her place, changed her mind, and preferred staying in her parent's hut, spending her days with her brother, and the sheep, or roaming about in the search of the gum of the mimosa. Biddy was but a tall great child of twelve, native born,

of Irish parents; and though she had attained the stature of a woman, she was a child still: Mrs. Doherty said “a great big baby.” Unless the drays were going to Sydney, which they were not, a servant could not be procured from thence, and Gertrude found herself under the necessity of filling all situations herself, with the busy time of the year coming on; and owing to fatigue, or inward disquiet, or exposure to draughts and damp floors, or all combined, she soon was a decided invalid, and stretched on her bed, with Mrs. Kenlow volunteer nurse, and a woman off the farm consenting to come as temporary domestic.

Patient and gentle was the sufferer: ready to take physic and gruel, and obey all orders; but this did not succeed in restoring her, till at length Mrs. Doherty sent in search of Dr. Bower. All her former tenderness and love for the young girl revived. The cold cloud that had rested between them cleared away, and once more Gertrude felt that sunny current of watchful tenderness pervading her every action.

Dr. Bower was not one for half-measures: he put blisters on above the paining side; and such compounds of all that is bitter and nauseous never did disciple of aesculapius rejoice in before.

“What can be the cause of her illness Doctor?” inquired Mrs. Doherty, anxiously, when he retired from his patient's room on his first visit, and was refreshing himself with rum and water, and beef and bread in the parlour.

“What do *you* think?” cautiously interrogated he in return, with one of his peculiar smiles.

“Why, she fell sick directly Tudor left us, can that have anything to do with it?”

“Nothing, nothing whatever,” he returned, flapping away a mosquito with the green bough he always carried for that purpose in warm weather.

“Well, I did think she had a fancy somewhere else, and I was quite vexed, though I don't know why I should blame the child for what so many others have done—but I did not like the fellow; indeed I hate the whole lot of them; and I'm really so fond of this girl I could not bear to see her sacrificed.”

“And so treated her with coldness to make her value his love less,” and Dr. Bower dropped another lump of sugar into his hot water with a satirical quietness.

“It was a foolish way I own. But when is she to be well again?”

“Not just yet.”

“Do you think there is danger?”

“Not absolutely, but she will want a little care, and then we shall have her among us again in a few weeks, I hope.”

How far this opinion was correct remained to be proved; certainly without any actual disease Gertrude remained so utterly prostrate as to cause many alarming apprehensions, and not unfrequently the question arose. How is it to end; will the pale transparent skin recover its bloom and plumpness, and the soft blue eyes their life and expression; will the inactive limbs be nimble, and useful as heretofore? “For our ways are not His ways, neither are our thoughts His thoughts.” And how often the life we dream most valuable is cut short! The father of the family falls in early manhood, a cripple reaches old age; the wife so rich in youth and beauty, so highly endowed with every virtue bows, to the hand of death, and the fragile babe draws its first breath of a cold sin-tinted air, battles through infancy, and treads with tottering steps over its mother's tomb; how inexplicable! her life apparently so valuable, its so valueless: but ‘as the Heavens are higher than the earth,’ so are His wisdom and motives than ours, and infinite reason have we even in the tangled web of mischances and evils around us, to acknowledge “He doeth all things well.”

Whilst these anxious reflections were passing through the minds of the watchers by the sick bed, Gertrude lay languid and gentle, always able to smile, and assure them she was better; yet day after day found her to all appearance quite as feeble and drooping.

Dr. Bower called her his ‘pattern patient;’ he knew not what to make, he said, of her stout heart and good spirits. Her eye fell upon the Holy volume lying open by her side. The mute reply set the old man thinking.

Chapter X.

“And yet a fearfull stillness reign'd
O'er each remembered place:
He saw no hurrying form appear—
No sweet and joyous face.
No kind and welcome words of cheer,
No tone that once had been.
The very music of his life,
Were gladdening the scene!”

“If Salvator Rosa could only see us” said Tudor to himself, as he stood with a stockman on a rugged pile of rocks hanging half way between the high level, and yawning abyss; some two hundred feet below where a cataract known at its head as ‘the springs,’ rushed through its stone walled bed. On every ledge were to be seen the rock wallaby, feeding, playing or scattering away before the stranger; while a dead one slung over the stockman's shoulder, and the gun in Tudor's hand, gave reason for their alarm.

“There's a shot Sir,” said the man, as two animals paused, and, raising themselves on their hind legs, looked innocently at the huntsmen.

“No, we will shoot no more, 'twould be a cruelty to kill them to waste,” replied Tudor, and he looked up the high dangerous precipice.

To all appearances scaling it was impossible; no steps, or path, gave promise of assistance: only the cracks and fissures in the standstone offered a resting place for the foot. “Can you carry the gun?” “Can you take the wallaby?” were the mutual questions; then in silence each began the ascent. Men of courage and resolution were both, cool headed, and keen eyed; but all they might possess of courage was needed. None but the accustomed eye dare look without dizziness down those deep gorges, or up those towering heights; and when deluged with dew, which the great exertion and the hot sun drew from every pore, they stood on the level, a silent prayer of gratitude rose up from the heart of Edward Tudor, though he had often run that peril before. But far more important business demanded his attention, during the brief interval he could give to each station, for they lay wide apart; and mounting their horses they set out across the table land: Tudor to gather in one mob of cattle, the stockman another; while Urutta, and a man belonging to the station, with a visitor from a neighbouring run, were each to scatter through the dangerous ranges, and collect the cattle together for a great ‘mustering,’ and ‘branding

day.' Tudor rode out upon a clear spur to 'take a survey' of the surrounding heights from this vast altitude; the scene was so grand and imposing that the young man paused to view it; high, peak above peak, were piled the rocky ridges, some wooded, others clothed in a green sward to their summits, only dotted here and there by a mountain ash, or bean tree; while the vales were intersected by streams rapid, shallow, and shaded by the native oak; in the serene light blue sky an eagle floated, and over all shone the unclouded sun, its rays reflected from the heights with a distressing power and intensity. Tudor shaded his eyes with his hand and scanned the usual resort of the cattle; here and there, a red or white speck in the far distance attested their presence, and faintly sounded the distant crack of the long hide stock whip; then there was an evident alarm among the cattle, the little red and white specks moved briskly about, and presently disappeared into the thick forest upon the table land.

While he watched he became conscious of another sound like very remote thunder, or of the rush of a vast body of water: louder and louder it grew, and yet too indefinite to be accurately judged. Was it a hurricane, or a whirlwind? was it a storm gathering among the mountains, or the approach of a large herd of cattle? A cry of "ho ho ho!" the sharp bark of a dog, and the ringing reverberation of a whip, all very distant, replied. Undoubtedly it was cattle, and he strained his ear to learn their direction.

"Yes, all right, they have taken the bald hill side, and will be down the gully directly."

On they come, nearer, nearer, the "ho ho!" growing louder, the yelp of the collie dogs more clear. Suddenly they sweep round; there is no doubt of it, they have altered their course, and avoiding the low bald hill, are advancing along the 'spur' on which he stands; two minutes more, and they will have cleared the scrub; escape is impossible; to descend the hill not to be done by other than wild cattle, or wallaby.

The last hour has come, the hour from which we all shrink: its solemnity mounting to horror, one chance only remains, to dismount and cling to the tree, the branches of which overhang the rough descent. It was done; a moment more, and even then, collected, and calm, with a prayer for mercy, the young man clasps his arms round the slender trunk, and awaits the end; there they are, a hundred, two, three hundred head at least of wild cattle, with tongues lolling from their foaming jaws, eyes flashing, and tails erect. The horse, conscious of his danger, bounds wildly over the precipitate descent. Poor fellow! thy master's eye follows thee with pity in thy mad career, whilst the furious mob scatter down after thee, keeping their footing as only wild cattle can, and presently the last has passed, and Tudor is safe! How deep the aspiration, "Thank God!"

The stockman did not follow the herd further, only desiring to remove them from the cattle run, and little dreaming how nearly they had caused the death of the superintendent, rode away.

A mile's arduous walking, slipping, and scrambling, enabled Tudor to reach, by a wide circuit, the foot of the 'spur' down which his horse had bounded, and there, as it lay, wounded, and dying, he received its last groan with gratitude that he was not a corpse beside it; and many a grave thought occupied his mind during the long march to the hut, and 'grazing ground' of a few stockhorses, where, once more mounted, he set off to assist gathering in the herds.

Some time previously when Tudor had visited this station, finding the run overstocked, he had determined on seeking for pasturage in the vicinity, where part of the stock might be removed. The stockmen were called into the council, and the most intelligent of 'a camp of blacks' who were located near; the whites looked grave and musing; they 'did not believe there was an acre fit for more than to feed a bandicoot;' and others 'would not exactly say;' in fact in the extent of their rambles nothing suitable was known. Tudor therefore turned to his sablefriends. "This blackfellow hab farm misser," said one, who from his knowledge of English acted as spokesman for his less accomplished countrymen. "Yes?"—"Yes." "Good farm?— big?" "Berry good," emphatically.— "Murry big?" "Murry."— As the black's English was not very extensive, Tudor eked out the conversation by his knowledge of their language, which highly delighted them; and a burst of rapturous applause followed each sentence after some patient questioning, and cross examination. Maretta's farm was found to be of sufficient capabilities to warrant an exploring party being formed to visit it. The owner of the land, which descends by regular birth right, like landed estates among ourselves, volunteered to act as guide for the consideration of a certain quantity of tobacco, and sugar, and a bit of white money, that is silver, copper being quite despised among them.

Two young men, proprietors of cattle 'runs' in the vicinity were at the hut that evening, and eagerly entered into the excitement of such a trip. These, with one of the most trustworthy and shrewd of the stockmen formed the party of adventurers, headed by Tudor.

"Let us have no more baggage than possible, Tudor," said young Drayton, filling a short black tobacco pipe while speaking.

"Certainly. I only need a blanket."

"You must bake us a damper," turning to the hut keeper,— as usual an old man past active service; and whose care-worn features peeped out from beneath a high pointed red cap.

The man looked at his fire with a critical eye; three long trunks of trees piled one on the other and burning fiercely in the wide fireplace, must be rolled up into one corner; and the deep mound of ashes reduced to a proper temperature. Meanwhile he kneaded the coarse 'ration' flour into a large flat cake, or "damper."

The three gentlemen occupied the evening in cleaning their guns, looking to straps, and buckles, about their saddles; and in dividing the requisite provisions into five portions; each enveloped in a blanket, and strapped on the saddles of the various riders.

The Aboriginals need no instruction in horsemanship. Mounted on a horse they appear perfectly at home: they gallop after stock, they ascend ravines, or descend declivities; they leap fallen trees, and swim streams, as if they had from, (we won't say the cradle that being a piece of furniture not in use in the Gunyah) but from earliest childhood, occupied that position. Maretta's horse was appointed him, and he made no remark, although he had never been mounted before; to him as to his companions, it was a matter of course; he only asked for a pair of boots, because some more experienced comrade informed him the stirrup iron would hurt his feet.

By daybreak next morning the party were some miles from the station hut, traversing the high top of a rocky elevation— presently the grey sky became rose colored, a ruddy glow crept over the distant mountain bound horizon, and tinted the far off heights; then slowly the orb of day appeared! All drew bridle to look for a few moments upon a scene sublime in its grand extent, and solemn majesty. Deep gullies rent the mountain sides, and fell into the course of the river, belted by the oak, or casuarina; shadows lay in rich violet masses upon the slopes; now and then a laughing jackass shouted its unearthly note in the woods; or a native dog returning to his lair, howled a short hungry wail, over a fruitless chase; or a low soft lowing of some herd just rising from their herby couch, deepened rather than broke the silence.

The journey that lay before the explorers promised to be both fatiguing, and protracted: gullies constantly crossed their path, and had to be 'headed;' a work often of time and great labour;— dense scrubs, beautified with flowering shrubs, obstructed their path. At one time water was scarce; at another too plentiful.— Thus three days had led them through a country almost, if not quite unknown to white men, or if traversed at all, only by stockmen seeking strayed cattle. Wild herds were frequent, and Tudor began to question if the "farm" would not prove too infested by them to offer sufficient pasturage for the cattle he proposed bringing there.

At length they reached it—a series of well grassed slopes, and hanging

levels—watered at distant intervals by springs—and running down to the river. It was evening when they gained the river's banks, and sprang to the ground—unsaddling their horses, confining their feet by hobbles, and leaving Maretta and the stockman to make a fire, and boil the tea, the young men started out on a ramble.

They were a mile or two from the camp when one of the party, a Mr. Gordon, stopping suddenly, exclaimed. "How came this here?" and as he spoke he pointed with his foot to a piece of leather, part of a bridle.

"Ha!" ejaculated Tudor who picked it up and examined it, and then turned a scrutinizing eye around. "Look!" he said in a voice which made them all start, and turn quickly in the direction he was looking.

A skeleton lay there, beneath a tree, where the wanderer had layed him down and died. What a history hung around the bleached bones, "how he must have wandered on for days; finally too weak to ride his horse, he had alighted—unsaddled him—turned him loose; and crept on further. Perhaps it had been in the heat of summer, when no water could be found to cool the parched lips—when the tones of the birds as they flew to and from the river mocked his sufferings; and when in sight of the oaks belting the stream he had died. Oh! the horrors of such a death!"

The young men stood round the skeleton in silent awe.

"Let us come away," said Drayton presently, "I can't bear this."

"Tudor," remarked Gordon with a gravity unknown to him on ordinary occasions, "to think that that poor pile of bones was a man, knocking over the ranges like ourselves, eh? God grant I may never have such a death!"

"*We*, you might have said Gordon," returned Drayton.

"Yes, we—poor fellow he must have suffered horribly. Let us search for any remains likely to throw light on whom he was. If he had a knife his name might be cut on it." Tudor stooped as he spoke to inspect the ground. It was growing dark, and after a long and careful search, unrewarded by such evidence as they sought, they returned to the camp, guided by the 'coo-e-ing' of the stockman, who was growing uneasy at their lengthened absence.

It appeared that Maretta's farm was in a locality little visited by the blacks, and some considerable time had elapsed since they had been encamped there. The death of the stockman must have been subsequent to that.

Seated round the fire, the travellers passed the greater part of the night in conversation, recounting their own perils, or the loss of those they had known, or heard of—while the cries of the opossum, and squirrel, and the roaring of the native bear in the branches of the trees around, added to the sense of solitude, and wildness.

Early next morning a grave was dug with their tomahawks, and the scattered bones carefully deposited in it, and covered with mould; 'twas a solemn office thus to lay by in darkness and silence, the remains of the Unknown One—and to remember that the soul which had animated those poor remnants of humanity had fled out on the vast for ever!

After the others had left the spot Tudor still lingered. The incident occurred previous to his acquaintance with Gertrude, and religion had then occupied but a small place in his attention; yet the scene was too able a preacher not to claim an attentive hearing—and then came back to his mind the stories from the large, and illustrated Bible which his mother used to read long years before; and forcibly there came to his lips the cry of Esau: “Bless me, even me oh my Father!” He seemed to fancy the dying man when earthly hopes had failed, awaking to a sense of the littleness of earth; and humbled by a consciousness of sinfulness and nothingness, before his Maker, raising that cry like him of old, who had sold his spiritual blessing for a mess of pottage, and when the earthly blessing also failed him, crying in agony “Bless me, even me oh my Father.”

And as Tudor carved on the stem of a large native appletree the brief record, not of his life, for that was enveloped in obscurity—nor yet of his death, for those moans of agony and those impotent struggles were known only to Him whose eye beholds all things—but the records of the remains being found—he added the cry of Esau as if for a perpetual prayer—“Bless me, even me oh my Father!”

And there, in the wilderness, the gaudy parrot, and the solemn crow settled in the branches above the grave, and little birds built their nests, and sung, and labored, till their callow broods were fledged, and took wing; and the native dog, and the spotted cat searching for nestlings, and eggs stole softly above him.

In time, all government regulations having been fulfilled, “Dead man's run,” as the stockmen named the locality, was taken possession of, and held for some years, till subsequently Tudor reduced the stock, by extensive sales, to a compass which made the extra run unnecessary. So it passed into other hands—but always some hand was found to refresh the carving, when the bark overgrew it; though the slight mound settled down to a level with the surrounding sod; and the pink and white orchid bloomed there; and even in winter the yellow snapdragon sent up its golden spike of flowers, as if to bear witness “All flesh is as grass.” To remind man that he “cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down, he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.”

“Wondrous truths and manifold as wondrous,
God hath written in those stars above:
But not less in the bright flow'rets under us
Stands the revelation of his love.

Bright and glorious is that revelation.
Written all over this great world of ours;
Making evident our own creation,
In these stars of earth,—these golden flowers.

And with childlike, credulous affection,
We behold their tender buds expand;
Emblems of our own great resurrection,
Emblems of the bright and better land.”

LONGFELLOW.

But we must not follow Tudor in all the hairbreadth escapes, and wild adventures of a stockman's life, neither can we venture on a long journey with him across the country to the sheep runs to count the flocks, and mark the victims for the butcher's knife.

* * * * *

Tudor was so accustomed to passing the greater part of every day on horseback, that the hundreds of miles he travelled were scarcely noted, and he turned his horse's head homewards, pleased to do so, but planning farther scenes of activity.

It was Mrs. Doherty's custom to write him a letter, a sort of digest of the farm news and the first Post Office was always visited by him on his return from these excursions.

“Here's your letter,” were the words before he had had time to inquire for one.

“Has it been here long?”

“Three weeks; the news must be old now.”

Tudor broke the seal, and read first, a detail of farm work, and how far his orders were carried out, &c.; then Mrs. Doherty proceeded thus: “I have been in great distress, or things would be forwarder; and indeed I write this at midnight, seated with the old Doctor beside Gertrude's bed; she is very ill. I cannot tell what ails her, except that I am sure she frets. I sadly fear the poor child has thrown away her love upon a fellow unworthy of her. Lately as I have sat silent and thoughtful by her side, and seen how perfectly patient, and resigned she is, I have reflected with more sense on the subject, and you know how many an agonizing thought the sight of that faded girl must have awakened. How is it that the best and most lovely

ever become the wife, or loving devotee of the most unworthy? The fellow's gay manners, and bright smiles—I can well know how pleasing,—but here I'm running over the paper with my restless unreadable scrawl, and on a subject you cannot enter into—I only too well.

How will it all end, God only knows. Dr. Bower gives me no satisfaction; but I know from his grave face he thinks badly of the case. Anyway it will be decided before you return. My dear Tudor, the Christian courage of this child has frightened me.”

Thus abruptly the letter terminated.

Tudor struggled hard to look unmoved, but he faded as white, as his tanned skin could fade.

“What's the matter? Nothing wrong I hope,” said the post-master.

“They have had some sickness on the farm, but all are well I hope, before this,” returned Tudor with a desperate effort.

“Come, come, you must not be going, you have not told us the news down the river yet; nor asked for any either; and I'll be bound you have not seen a paper since you passed up.”

“There's no news stirring.”

“Why I heard there was a dispute 'tween Jennings' and Houghton's boundaries.”

“There was something of the sort.”

“How is it likely to go? Who is in the right? Has it been before the Commissioners?”

“I believe not—good day.”

“Hold!” cried the postmaster, spreading out his arms to bar the door, and laughing.

“Give me the particulars of that murder: word reached us that two shepherds were murdered by the blacks. I must have the particulars for the papers.” He was the “our correspondent” of that locality.

“I know nothing about these matters,” replied Tudor sternly; and relaxing a little, added,—“Mr. Jennings is on his way to Sydney, you will see him to-morrow, and can learn all you want to know. I must go, or I shall be benighted. Good day.”

He dashed into the saddle and cantered away, leaving the discomfited contributor looking after him.

When alone, and unobserved he perused the letter again, and a tear forced its way from under the unwilling lids.

However sad, and melancholy may be the death of a friend, if we are present to watch the gradual inroads of disease, to mark the severe sufferings, and perhaps gather words of Christian hope, and faith, these all tend materially to lessen the pang; but suddenly to receive intelligence that

one we left blooming and vigorous is dying, and to be uncertain if they still live, to feel each moment of vital importance, and yet be many days' journey asunder, these are tortures which Tudor had to experience.

During his rapid return, he only paused when it was necessary to rest and bait his horse; for the time he neither seemed to require food nor sleep; only pity for his faithful horse delayed him, and then the sacrifice of those hours, any one of which might have witnessed the closing scene of that sick bed, if indeed she still lived, was so much torture wrung from his very heart's core. Nor could he gather any intelligence as he approached home: even the last day, at the wayside tavern, where he called to refresh his horse, they had not heard more than that, a fortnight before, Lakin was there enquiring for the doctor; how the patient then was, he could not learn with any accuracy; and he pushed on as speedily as his weary horse could move.

Next in his own hour of extremity, or in any affliction that had befallen himself had Tudor so earnestly sought the aid of the Almighty, for His sake whose name unlocks the door of mercy, and forgiveness; feeling powerless to avert the calamity he dreaded, humbled by his own insufficiency, he turned to that Rock which presents in every storm an unmoved resting place.

Once more the outward limits of Murrumbowrie met his eye, once more he sped along that road on which he had formerly driven Gertrude and Kitty Kenlow to the Store. His impatience was almost past endurance, the very horse which before moved with drooping head and tail, now pricked its ears and snorted, struggling on to the desired stable and rest. Tudor patted his neck and encouraged him by voice, and the poor thing mended his pace; presently the bleating of a flock of ewes, and lambs greeted him, and he dashed off the road, shouting "Hoy, Bill!" to the shepherd.

"How do, master?" returned the man touching his hat and approaching, "we weren't expecting to see you down so soon."

"How is all on the farm?" he dared not ask the dreaded question.

"Very well, I believe—the wheat's looking beautiful—I saw it from the point of the hills."

Had the fellow no feeling?

"They have had some sickness at the house I heard."

"So my old woman was a telling me."

Tudor was stung by the man's stoicism, yet dared not show how interested he was in the subject.

"It was not Mrs. Doherty, was it?" he said trying to draw him out.

The shepherd was so proverbially a man of few words that his fellows had surnamed him "*Silent Bill*," and he briefly said "no."

Tudor resumed his way.

“If she were dead he would have been sure to tell me,” he thought, trying to comfort himself. At last the farm and the dwellings met his eye. All was still, and quiet, not a person moving, only the dogs bounded out to meet him, barking and jumping in their glee; the kitchen was empty, so was the stable; he entered the parlor, no one was there. The desertion of the house was nothing unusual, only his excited feelings made him feel so just then. The rapid tread of Mrs. Doherty along the verandah attracted his attention, another movement and her hand was clasped in his.

“Why Tudor,” she said, “how terribly pale, and tired you look; why, you are as bad as us, who have had all this watching and nursing; or the poor girl herself—what have you been doing?”

“A little tired,” he said carelessly, for he saw in the brisk manner no presence of “sorrow for the departed.”

“When did you leave the station?”

He evaded the question and never told her, or any one else on the farm how short a time it had taken him to return; nor had he any difficulty in learning all he wished from Mrs. Doherty, her heart being full of the subject, she only required an attentive listener, and if Tudor said nothing, she had no reason to complain that he did not attend.

“Gertrude is in the garden now, in my old arm chair; I had it carried down there, and Lakin and Mrs. Jackson, who is assisting about the house, took one each side, and we had her in it, so that she went nicely; she is there now, under the large peach trees: we did not see you coming, I came up for her book; will you come down and see her?”

“Not to-night.”

“True: you are tired. Will you take tea with us?”

“No, thank you. I shall make a long night of it I think. You will please tell Miss Gertrude I desired my respects, and was gratified to hear she was recovering.”

What a cold message it was, it cost him a pang to send it, but his memory was only too retentive of the cause of her illness.

Gertrude felt it rather unkind that he did not come in person to congratulate her upon her partial recovery, quite ignorant that it was excess, not want of feeling, which kept him away.

Late next afternoon Tudor presented himself, still rather pale, and hollow-eyed, but quite as collected and grave as usual; he shook hands, and drew a chair near her, and said in moderate language that he was sorry she had been ill, and feared she over exerted herself, and that she must be cautious for the future.

“I am so glad you have returned,” replied Gertrude with animation.

“Are you?” said he, quite startled.

“Yes” she returned, “for Mrs. Doherty has been wearing herself out nursing me; indeed, she has been so kind, and so has the Doctor, and every one; but I know now you are here, you will amuse her, and take her out on the farm, she must not sit with me so much, the confinement will injure her health.”

Tudor bowed, and promised to exert his influence, in a very quiet tone.

“I am getting strong rapidly, only my appetite is rather bad,” the invalid continued.

“Have you no fancies? sometimes sick folks relish one thing more than another.”

“I did enjoy a little plump bronze winged pigeon, which was shot, and grilled.”

Tudor rose and extended his hand, “I must not fatigue you with a long conversation” he said, “I hope soon to see you about as usual.”

Gertrude thanked him, and he went. From that time until she recovered her wonted appetite, she never wanted for such game as the bush yielded, and when she thanked him, he made light of the subject, and turned the conversation to some other theme.

Chapter XI.

“For every worm beneath the moon,
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.”

Gertrude's amendment, after a certain stage, was rather rapid, and she was able to lay by the quinine, and port wine, and take up the house keys, her insignia of office, again; and an assistant, an old woman travelling up the road on a dray, seeking her fortune, hearing of the want of a servant at Murrumbowrie, came over, and was engaged.

She was very unlike Mary; a hardened wicked looking old woman, ready to be insolent, or to give warning at any moment, and with an insatiate craving after rum; still she could work, and shearing was commencing.

The many little cares and annoyances which light on the housekeeper's head, Gertrude found were materially increased since Sarah's entrance into the kitchen. Often these annoyances were so trivial, or even ludicrous, that while they tried her, could only provoke a laugh if repeated. She had been lamenting some of Sarah's derelictions, a short time after she came, to Mrs. Doherty, and received a laugh instead of the sympathy she had expected; and a little annoyed, Gertrude continued to stone plums for the to-morrow's pudding.

Mrs. Doherty watched her in silence, and then said:

“You know nothing of domestics yet, child. I had a woman here some time ago, who when I sent a message to Lakin, carried him ‘my compliments, and that I should be obliged by his fetching me a load of wood.’ I chanced to overhear her.”

“What did you do?” inquired Gertrude, laughing.

“Went into the kitchen at once, and said ‘no such thing, I desire you to fetch the wood, and you,’ turning to the woman, ‘don't make a fool of yourself, and me in future.’ In fact I was nettled, child; and spoke rather sharp. As for you and Sarah, do not mind her impertinent remarks.”

Gertrude was not much comforted, however; and Sarah was so frequently enjoying her pipe, and cup of tea, that no inconsiderable share of labor fell upon her; then fires were neglected, and puddings turned out raw; and joints of meat only warmed.

Gertrude was still weak from the effects of her illness, and her philosophy was not proof against these trials, and more than once, she pillowed her face in her bed, and wept freely. Still such weakness was

rather physical than mental; and generally relieved by a run through the orchard; or in obstinate cases, a ramble as far as Mrs. Kenlow's: then the girls would go down the creek in search of flowers—here were the splendid crimson bosses of the Bottle Brush—the fragrant Sallow—and Mimosa, golden with bloom; and if they prolonged their walk to where the water lay in large pools, between rocky, and sandy banks, the pretty “Love Everlasting,” and various other unnamed beauties rewarded them. Dearly did both girls love such an excursion: side by side, quickly springing from foot to foot, along the narrow cattle track by the water, peeping into Willow Wrens' and Superb Warblers' tiny nests, peering among long grass for the speckled eggs of the Water Hen, and Quail; or pausing to watch the downy brood of the little Diver plunging beneath the stream. At one time, Kitty used to evince a desire to carry home the contents of the nests, as additional spoil; but Gertrude won her over to her own way of thinking before long.

“Leave them, Kitty,” she would say, “don't let you and I lessen the happiness there is in the world—how the old bird loves her mate—only see how she has built her nest—and just hear how that little creature sings. No, Kitty, we'll be two good angels, and bring peace with us wherever we go—we won't have sighs and heart-aches follow us; will we?”

“Well you are a good girl, Gertrude,” returned Kitty fondly, “and I won't touch them; though I don't think the Water Hen would miss a few eggs; she has quite a nest full.”

“Kitty, did you ever hear of a Hindoo magical tune, called ‘Raga,’ which when it is played, they say produces thunder and lightning and plagues?—now if we rob the birds' nests as we go, we shall be as bad,” said Gertrude, laughing. “And then the little egg-shells soon break when you have threaded them.”

Kitty immediately had some questions to ask about the Hindoo music; and as in her eyes, Gertrude's knowledge was unbounded, the birds' nests were not only unmolested, but the idea of shedding happiness around our path in life, of being a blessing, a living embodiment of the Commandment, “Love one another,” was at once so new and so charming, that in a thousand little ways, she was for the future putting it in practice.

“My word!” Mrs. Kenlow remarked, “I never saw any thing like Kitty; she always was a good girl, but lately she is like a ray of sunshine on a cloudy day.”

However, Gertrude was still very weak; a great deal too etherialized for this working-day world of ours; and even a run through the clear, bright air, and the soft, mellow notes of the sacred Kingfisher, and the smell of the fresh woods and mossy banks, and flowers, could not prevent

weariness: so that home became a desirable resting place. Then arose a goodnatured contention as to who should carry the largest boughs for the fire-places; and finally it would be settled, by Kitty triumphantly shouldering the boughs, and Gertrude's apron being filled with flowers.

If Kitty could stay to help arranging the flowers in jars, or to adorn the vacant hearths with fresh branches, the pleasure was heightened to both. The young Emigrant's taste and knowledge were so vastly superior to her own, that she learned many a lesson over a jar of flowers.

Thus they were engaged one evening, the burning heat of a summer's day had given place to a pleasant, though warm evening, and the girls seated themselves in the front verandah, as it was called; although that portion of the house looking into the garden had no approach, excepting through a little wicket opening into the garden; after a style very prevalent in country residences in Australia; which makes the front of the house strictly private, and unapproachable: so that for a visitor to present himself at the back is no want of etiquette, or selfrespect: but in fact, the only alternative; and in every way most convenient; as he is nearly sure to be mounted, and finds in the back yard, some one to take his horse, or at least a post to which he can secure it.

Mrs. Doherty had brought out a book, and was seated near them, flapping away mosquitoes, which were humming in clouds around her, and reading by turns; occasionally stamping, or exclaiming against the misery of their tingling bites; and Kitty was handing the flowers to Gertrude, to place in a large colonial jar, round which she was twining a wreath of Clematis.

“Oh! how beautiful it looks—now don't it—just see, Mrs. Doherty.”

“Yes, very nice, Kitty—Bless me! the mosquitoes.”

“Now Gertrude, here is a Bottlebrush and a Native Rose.”

“Not two red flowers together, Kitty.”

“Well, some Sarsaparilla?”

“No, that is purple, and crimson—won't do, Kitty,” and Gertrude shook her head sagely.

“Oh! I always forget about what you call original colors, and—what is it?”

“Compounds—that tuft of Everlastings, or the Wattle; thank you, that is famous—now the Sarsaparilla?”

“Good evening to you, Missus,” said a voice near them; the girls both started, and Mrs. Doherty arose.

“Why John!” she said, in a tone of pleasure, “where have you come from?”

A middle aged, or rather elderly man, tanned very brown by exposure to the sun, and much marked with care lines; stood before them: his small

grey eyes were lighted up by pleasure; and the breeze blowing back his grey shaggy hair, revealed a face of homely worth. The blue frock was worn, and faded; and the cabbage-tree hat nearly black. 'Twas a son of toil evidently: but Mrs. Doherty welcomed him with satisfaction.

"I took the liberty of coming round, Missus, hearing your voice on the verandah," he said apologetically.

"That was right, John; where have you come from?"

"I have been across the country, and up and down one place or 'nother, some hundreds of miles, since this time twelve months; but I knew it was about sheep-washing time now, so I worked my way back. I was speaking to some of my mates, Missus, we are ready when you want us."

"Very good, John. Mr. Tudor is about to begin washing. And so you have just returned?"

"I just laid down my 'swag' in the yard Missus; you are looking well, too, thank God!—He's been taking care on us both; through many dangers, perhaps."

The shearer spoke gravely, and reverently, and Gertrude looked up, at once pleased and surprised—it was not unusual to hear the name of the Almighty pass the lips of many on the farm, but there was nothing in John's manner to indicate either a mere habit, or a reckless blasphemy.

"Yes John, you are right; we have something to be thankful for," returned Mrs. Doherty, "and here is a new member of my family, a young girl, but a good one."

The man turned with an attempt at a bow towards the girls; he seemed to think that Mrs. Doherty had spoken correctly: but she told him to go into the kitchen, and get his supper, and he departed.

"That man, Gertrude," said Mrs. Doherty, approaching her, "is one of our shearers; he has been employed here for ten years: he comes regularly, about this time; works through washing and shearing, and then goes away—the floor would be lost without him—he is a first rate hand, and has so much influence among the men, that I have only to tell him we want hands, and he will search up his mates, and bring quite a batch of them to help. I have a great respect for him—he is a good man—go where he will, and he is always travelling, he carries his Bible with him; and never lets a day pass without reading it; it is quite a curiosity, so underlined, and marked and thumbbed."

"They call him the Parson," remarked Kitty.

"They do, Kitty—it would be well if they were more like him—you never see him take a glass of grog—he will take a drink of tea, when the others are having their spirits—his count of the scores is always correct; and there is no trouble with him—it is a pity that he is like the rest a mere

wanderer, roving from farm to farm, and up and down the country.”

A fresh attack of a lilliputian army of mosquitoes drove Mrs. Doherty back to her chair, and a vigorous buffeting of her handkerchief.

Gertrude was much interested in the shearer; there is something in a pious, consistent character which commands our respect, in any station; and it is an undoubted fact, that religion elevates and enlarges the understanding.

The old sun embrowned, corny handed shearer, was received even by those who scoffed at his principles, with a certain respect—they would not all sit down to hear him read from that well studied Bible; nor did they feel disposed to join in his prayers; yet he did find some who would—and not even the most reckless and abandoned thought of inviting him to a drinking carousal, or other scene of unholy revelry; which too often constitutes the sole idea of pleasure, entertained by the working class. To labour hard and earn money, and then have a thorough drunken carouse, or “go on the spree,” as they would say, is the received meaning of enjoyment, among the wandering class; who like birds of passage, flit from settlement to settlement, supplying the farmer, or the wool-grower with the labor requisite at their busy seasons.

Meanwhile the two girls had arranged the flowers, with no want of elegance and taste; and Kitty ran away home. Gertrude sat down to finish the day with some needlework.

There was a happy home feeling growing up around that hearth, which had never been there before. Mrs. Doherty was not domestic; that calm and holy influence which dwells around home, she had never felt till lately. Home, the scene of those thousand little sacrifices and self obligations, which bind heart to heart, and redeem this world from being utterly a scene of hollow show, a gold worship; which teaches us to pray “Our Father which art in heaven,” with the heart as well as lip. Home, where we learn to lisp a prayer to our Maker, and at the mother's knee, listen to the beautiful story of Christ blessing the little ones—never to be forgotten, are those sacred ties—the foot may wander from the right path, but through all devious ways, will the whisper of memory pursue; inviting the wanderer back to peace.

Here is it that earth's load should be laid by, and the husband and the brother seek and find their happiness; and the wife and mother feel it the noblest field for their talents, and affections.

Perhaps something of this gleamed faintly into Mrs. Doherty's mind, for there were times when she would talk of sitting down, and being comfortable, and of enjoying herself quietly at home that day; not that she relinquished her active habits; for every fine day found her walking round

her fields, and examining her stacks, and barns. Mr. Tudor used to enquire, smiling, if all was right, and to her satisfaction; and then offer her his arm, and lead her off to see some ploughing, or fencing; or whatever the work in hand might be.

But to return to the morning after John the shearer's arrival; he had been up early, and round among the huts, and to see his old acquaintances; and when Gertrude entered a dwelling, where there was sickness, she found him reading by the bedside. She paused on the threshold to listen—slowly and solemnly he proceeded, following the words with his finger, and now and then interlarding the passage with some simple explanation, or deduction. It was a little while before he became aware of her presence, and then he rose and offered her the rough wooden bench he was seated on.

“No, no,” she said pleasantly, “be seated, John; I did not come to interrupt you. How are you this morning, Margaret?” addressing the invalid, who was a shepherd's wife.

“I'm better, Miss Gertrude, John here has been reading to me; and it seems company like. I didn't think of seeing you again, John.”

“We don't know what's before us, Margaret.”

The woman looked her assent, and Gertrude began to unpack her basket of delicacies.

“Mrs. Doherty sent you this part of a cold fowl, and here are a few strawberries.”

The ripe cool fruit was eagerly taken, and her presents laid by on a shelf for future use; and then the shearer entered into conversation with Gertrude: perhaps he thought he read the marks of premature decay in the clear skin, and blue shade round the eyes which yet lingered as witness of her recent illness. But he seemed very anxious to deepen in her mind a sense of the value of religion, reminding her of the Apostle's definition of true religion; and repeating “to keep herself unspotted from the world.”

“That is hard to do” she returned with emotion.

“It is hard, but not too hard Miss, for we have the promise that His strength is made perfect in weakness, so that the more we feel our weakness, just so much more we can count on Him.”

Gertrude's eyes filled with tears, and as she took up her basket, it was with an earnest prayer that she might indeed be kept unspotted from the world. Occupied with these thoughts she entered the back yard. Tudor was there holding by a cord round its neck a snow white young calf.

“Oh! what—” inquired Gertrude in alarm.

“It is a supplicant for your charity, Miss Gertrude,” he returned, “it is doomed to death, and the idea struck me that you might like to rear it as a pet, so I brought it up for you to see.”

“The little beauty,” said she, running her hand over its spotless side, but what shall I do with it?”

“You must feed her on milk, and keep her about the house, that her mother may not see her; let me see, do you think if I partitioned off the drying green, it would do for a run for your nurseling?”

“Oh yes, nicely, but Mr. Tudor, why need it be killed?”

“Its mother is not strong enough to rear it. Shall I put her in the stable 'till the enclosure is made?”

“Thank you. I will fetch it some warm milk.” Gertrude was all delight, and from henceforth, ‘Snowdrop’ became a general object of petting. Tudor used to bring up handfuls of green food from the fields; and Kitty's pockets presented endless stores of that country delicacy, unknown to pastry-cooks, called ‘fat cake,’ in the making of which Mrs Kenlow had earned much celebrity; the dairyman reserved a good can of milk for Miss Gertrude's pet calf; moreover Tudor himself arranged its pen, and fitted up a stall in the stable for its nightly resting place; though he looked very grave, and disclaimed any obligation, when Gertrude thanked him.

“We shall have a busy scene to-day,” remarked Tudor, meeting Gertrude one morning in the back court; “we begin sheep washing, would you like to see it?”

“May I come?”

“Certainly. Mrs. Doherty will be sure to pay us a visit: the walk is not long. We wash near the house, because of the grass paddock to dry the sheep—there, do you see where those hurdles are set up, on the bank of the long water hole?”

“I see—I should much like to look at the poor little things taking their bath.”

“Let the men have an early dinner. I will send Lakin up soon after eleven.”

“It shall be ready.”

There had been a grand day of preparations; Gertrude had risen early to see two huge plum puddings in the pot; and the great copper was full of joints of beef; while a basket of potatoes stood ready to be put down, and two loaves of unusual dimensions were placed in the pantry, among tin mugs and plates, and other requisites for carving, and eating and drinking: the can of tea had been sent down already, and a thin blue column of smoke rose by the water's edge, where the kettle was set to boil.

The running, and bustling necessary to ensure the early meal, and place all things in such a train that she might leave home, had blanched Gertrude's cheeks, and Mrs. Doherty could hardly be persuaded to let her go.

“Well, well, then child, come along; only don't knock up.”

“I will be careful,” said she, and bounded away for her bonnet and shawl.

The day was beautiful; a clear brilliant sun shone with intense rays upon the sparkling water, still flowing cheerfully after the winter's rain: myriads of gnats, and ephemera danced, and fluttered above its surface: the Magpies taking their midday rest in the trees, rehearsed their songs, and indulged in a good deal of social gossip; and on a white dead limb overhanging the sheep pen, an old crow sat with a business-like eye, watching the sheep, and evidently counting on a death among them. The swallows skimmed through the air with nimble wing, and all things seemed to echo the words of the poet— “the gift of life is good.”

The banks of the large water-hole selected to wash the sheep in, were high, and rather rocky, with occasional little green levels, now occupied by pens of sheep; whilst those already washed, were scattering through the great meadows, under the shepherd's care, looking weary with the weight of their long wet wool, bleating unceasingly to the little lambs playing among them; or perhaps a ewe, separated from her curly treasure, ran distractedly about, bleating, and searching the groups of wanton gambollers romping up some bank.

The men stood in a line across the stream, passing the struggling sheep rapidly from hand to hand. Tudor was on the bank roughly dressed in the universal blue serge frock, and he only smiled, on their arrival, and sent Lakin with his coat to spread upon a flat rock, under a Sallow tree, golden with fragrant bloom. Every sheep as it reached the land, passed through his inspecting hands, and it was not till the pen was emptied, that he came to them.

“How do you like it?” he said to Gertrude.

“It is a very animated scene; and how nice, and white the sheep look.”

“Pretty well; yes, very fair.” He was evidently rather proud of them.

“But what a terrible noise they make.”

“Yes, the ewes, and lambs get divided. Does it annoy you? We shall be washing for two days longer, if you prefer to see another flock.”

“Perhaps I may come again to-morrow. How wet the poor men's clothing is,” she added, looking at a group of them assembled on the bank, smoking their short black pipes.

“I have sent Lakin for their dinner.”

“It is ready for them.”

“That's a good girl; the work is so exhausting, they need it; and plenty I hope. We have eight extra hands, besides our own people.”

“Enough for a little regiment; and here are Sarah, and Lakin.”

They just then came in sight, each bearing a huge basket of provisions.

“Hurrah for pretty Sally!” cried a wag.

“Three cheers for dinner!” responded a greater lover of plum pudding than bright eyes.

“Do you dine with the men?” inquired Gertrude.

“Yes, are you going?”

“Mrs. Doherty is speaking to the shepherd, I think she is going home.”

He offered her his arm.

“No, no, go and get your dinner; I would not trust it among those hungry mouths, and great knives,” she said, laughing.

“I will venture it, for I have something to say to you.”

They walked on slowly.

“I do not like the appearance of Sarah.”

“Nor I, yet we were glad to get her.”

“She is undoubtedly a wicked woman: she would love to poison your mind by tales of her own exploits, or of other such worthies as herself. Never listen to them, Gertrude: be courageous, and if she troubles you, promise me that you will let me know.”

“I certainly will; but perhaps she might not obey you.”

“She would not. I have no right to interfere with the household concerns: but I could get her discharged, and find you a substitute. Be sure you tell me.” He was so earnest, and looked so very grave, that Gertrude replied with solemnity:

“Indeed I will.”

They had approached Mrs. Doherty, and Tudor talked a little about the sheep, and then returned to his dinner.

“Take the grog to Tudor at the woolshed, Gertrude,” said Mrs. Doherty, some days later.

She placed the great black bottles in a basket, and departed with her load: as she neared the large building where the shearers were at work, she could hear their merry voices, and the clipping of the shears, and presently stood at the door. Tudor saw her, and came forward to relieve her of her load, and place her behind the screen among the piles of sorted fleeces, while he gave out the spirits.

“What busy work!” she said when he returned.

“Is it not? They are going to have a smoke now, while the pens are filled: will you stay till they begin again?”

She assented, and Tudor continued to fold up the fleeces, and lay them in their proper places; chatting as he did so.

“They earn a deal of money,” he said, in reply to a question from Gertrude. “They lead a nomadic life. Most of them wander from farm to farm, and through the stations, travelling hundreds, and thousands of miles;

harvesting, haymaking, and shearing; the climate is so varied in the Colonies, by following the seasons, they have constant work.”

“How?”

“In the low regions, or near Sydney, the Hunter, and other places, the climate is warmer than here, the crops come in earlier, and the sheep may be shorn sooner; suppose then, they begin there, and are occupied some weeks, then we are ready for them, from us they pass to Maneroo, or elsewhere, where the climate is severe, and so on.”

“Are there many of these wanderers?”

“I should say they bear a large proportion of our population, but they are a class whose numbers it would be hard to calculate with accuracy. They are mostly under sentence, they have no home, no district, their idea of pleasure is a gross debauch; they are ignorant in most cases, of the rudiments of education, and religious knowledge. We look for the class, though not individuals, as regularly as the seasons. Perhaps we may never see any of these strange faces again, Gertrude. Of this class it is we read the sad paragraphs of ‘found drowned,’ ‘death from excessive intemperance,’ and a hundred others with the last sad epitaph, ‘the deceased was unknown.’ ”

“Have they no redeeming qualities?”

“Let us hope so. Yes, I think they are often generous to prodigality, and warm-hearted—they are the offspring of ignorance: I hope the time will come when education will eradicate this great moral evil—they are not persons of native birth, and they have no tie here; their wandering life too, is fatal to moral responsibility; for they have no character to support, their very names are unknown, we hail them as ‘mate,’ and if we inquire their name, receive some such answer as I did just now from that uncouth fellow by the door, ‘Lily will do, master,’ such a lily! Can you class him as a lily of the valley, think you, or a fleur-de-lis?”

A merry laugh ended the conversation.

It was Gertrude's delight to learn something of the customs, and modes of life of those around her, and silent as Mr. Tudor usually was, he was ever ready to gratify her; so that by the time the pipes were smoked, and pens filled, she was surprised to find how long she had stood there.

“Do you see that old fellow,” said Tudor, in a low tone, nodding towards a forbidding looking man with a blind eye.

“Yes.”

He has some link with Sarah, he only came into the floor this morning: after he had been up to the kitchen to breakfast, he came to me, and cautioned me about Sarah, begging me not to let her have any grog; he fears her losing control of her tongue, I see. I told him, I had nothing to do

with her; but he is uneasy: he has found several excuses to go up to the kitchen, he hates, yet fears her; and does not let her out of his sight: she also is restless; depend on it, some dark secret is between them.”

Gertrude shuddered, and looked alarmed.

“Would you object to part with her?”

He evidently felt distressed, lest in any way, her dark nature should cast a shadow upon the child-like innocence, and guilelessness of the young girl's character. Gertrude had learnt to look up to him in all difficulties, and had great confidence in his power to help; so she only whispered how pleased she should be.

“You would not be afraid of black Nanny would you? she is a good natured creature, and very useful, and clean when about a house: she has been with Mrs. Inkersole some time, but is with the tribe now; they are encamped on the run.”

“Can she cook, and wash?”

“Both well, I believe; she is frequently employed at the Shettles': they like her much.”

Two days later, and by some quiet influence which Gertrude heard nothing of, Sarah had been discharged, and the Aboriginal woman filled her place, till another domestic could be procured. The blind shearer had found occasion to be discharged also, by running his shears into an unfortunate sheep, in such a manner as to cause its almost instant death, and his own removal from the floor in a style more expeditious than agreeable. And the old pair went on their way, bound by the galling chain of crime, and chafing in their bitter hate, and fear.

Chapter XII.

“Suddenly rose from the South, a light, as in autumn the blood-red
Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven,
Columns of shining smoke uprose, and flashes of flame were
Thrust through their folds, and withdrawn, like the quivering hands
of a martyr.”

LONGFELLOW.

In a few days, all the extra workmen had departed: some to neighbouring farms; some to their own homes; and others to their migratory tours, up and down the country; of this number was John; he came up to the house the evening before he left, to take leave of Mrs. Doherty and Gertrude.

“If we all live Missus, I hope to be here next year, but that is in God's hands—I am getting an old man now, and may not be alive.”

“Nonsense, John! you will live many a year yet,” returned Mrs. Doherty—“Have you seen Mr. Tudor?”

“I shall see him in the morning, Missus: but I shall be off afore you are up. He is a fine young gentleman—every one says how handsome you, and he behave: we would sooner work for you than any employer in the quarter.”

“Thank you, John.”

“I've a message for you, Miss,” pursued the shearer, turning to Gertrude, as he stood in the doorway, twisting his hat round and round, between his hands.

“Indeed John, and what may it be?”

“They a'nt my words, Miss: but they are His—they are these, ‘watch ye, therefore, and pray always,’ ” and with this solemn message, the shearer bid them farewell, and departed to the huts, to await the morning for his journey.

The heat of summer, so oppressive to the immigrant, had set in—the green fields turned brown; the locusts sang in the trees; and the cockchafer hummed round all green things; of an evening, when the sun had set, nature appeared to revive; the drooping flowers held up their languid heads, and the gaudy Sphinx Moth hovered above them, sucking, with its long trunk, the honey from the Corolla: then, walking became agreeable, or yet more pleasant was it to lounge in the easy chairs in the verandah, and read, or work, or converse.

Gertrude liked to combine all these occupations; busily employing her

needle, while from time to time, she read a paragraph from the open book on her knee; or conversed with Mrs. Doherty.

She used to exert herself much through the day, that she might have the evening hours free from interruption; and by allotting each occupation its fixed time, and doing it with all her might, she succeeded. Those who systematically employ time, live really speaking, twice as long as the trifler, moments glide on so swiftly, and noiselessly, that we do not mark their flight; until the grave encloses us, and the hours passed in idling, are for ever lost.

Tudor used to train the creepers round the verandah posts, and trim the shrubs, when above the females' reach, or too laborious for them, and requiring greater skill than Lakin possessed in floriculture; thus he was employed, and Mrs. Doherty found sufficient amusement in watching him, and Gertrude plied her needle, with the story of 'Evangeline' beside her, when Dr. Bower joined them. He used in summer, if possible, to travel by night, to avoid the heat, and he was now on his way to a patient, but paused to take a cup of tea, and have an hour's chat.

Gertrude brought out a little stand, and set the tea things; and presently he was deeply engaged in conversation, tea, ham, and bread, and butter.

"What were you reading?" inquired he, when he had communicated the news of the district.

Gertrude held up the book.

"What, poetry! that is wasting time."

"How so?" called Tudor from the top of the ladder, pausing in his endeavours to direct a stubborn branch of a Cape Honeysuckle.

"What good does it do?" responded the Doctor.

"Elevates the mind, refines the sentiments, and carries many an important lesson through the ear, to the heart."

The doctor was nothing of a poet; not only not a rhymester, but he had no poetry in him. The convenience of a moonlight night, not its beauty, and the utility of the brook, not its musical babbling, were his medium of valuation; so he disputed the assertion altogether.

"And supposing, which mind you, I do not, that poetry can refine, what's the use?"

"Of refinement?"

"Yes."

"To raise men above savages; to bring them nearer to their Creator; to purify the taste. Are not these worth doing? nor are these all it does."

"I did not think you were a poet, Tudor; I rather thought the very pattern superintendent, and most zealous, and ardent of farmers, was an utilitarian," remarked Dr. Bower, in his saturnine manner.

“Perhaps the ‘pattern’ combines the two,” returned he, laughing good-humouredly.

“Do the men work as well, while you indite Odes to the Moon?” inquired the other, rather satirically.

“What they would do in such a case, I cannot say. It is possible to have a poet's heart, without his pen.” And he returned to his occupation.

“That is the reason we may conclude there are so many poor writers of verse,” pursued the Doctor, when the branch was nailed down.

“All verse is not poetry,” returned he.

Doctor Bower looked a little puzzled. “Do you confine poetry to the gentry, to the aristocrats among writers?”

“By no means—no one disputes the poetical talent of Burns, or Shakespeare; yet neither of them were of the aristocracy.”

“A great many celebrated people, have been of humble origin,” remarked Mrs. Doherty.

“They have,” replied Tudor, “for genius is the gift of Heaven, not of wealth, or station; and I do think that those obstacles which surround the poor man of talent, arouse his energies; he is thrown on himself, and he then learns his own strength, and weakness, he must exert all his powers, or fail, and failure to such minds, is intolerable; besides, his mind is not satiated with appliances—book by book, he forms his little library, and to buy those books, he must toil, and he must suffer want perhaps; then by painful and intense application he maintains his ground, before he takes another step, and the soul-crushing lethargy, which clings more or less around all, is shaken off, and the man relies on himself, and respects himself, while the vast field of knowledge yet unexplored, leads him on, and humbles him with a sense of very ignorance.”

As he leant over the ladder, his cheek glowing, his eye full of intense feeling, and his quick yet impassioned tones, coming to them, Gertrude felt that he knew something of this course he was describing; and that those cravings for knowledge which urge on the mind from step to step, make it long for the time when earthly weakness, and infirmity shall no longer retard its progress, was not unknown to him: though the world might never pronounce its verdict on his talents: though it were even to deny their existence.

“Who would have expected such enthusiasm from you?” returned the visitor, a little perplexed.

“I am sorry to disappoint your expectations,” replied Tudor with his usual gravity; recalled by the doctor's want of sympathy; however he had read Gertrude's face, and that was enough; and a brisk volley of hammering succeeded, while Dr. Bower argued the matter at greater length with the

females; Mrs. Doherty did not care for poetry, but did not see that it could do any harm; and Gertrude whom Tudor's collection of books had introduced to many of the choicest poems in the English Language, and who had an intuitive love of the beautiful which had been early cultivated by her parents, and fostered among the grand old arches and stained windows of the church of Comb Ending, and solemn Yews shading many a quaint gravestone—as well as the sunny meadows and the cheerful stream flowing through the village, felt infinitely more than she could express.

In these days it is customary to talk of 'beautiful' books, 'beautiful' poems, 'beautiful' religious sentiments, and 'beautiful' death-beds: but Dr. Bower being 'behind the times' had not included this universal phrase in his vocabulary of common words; nor were his opponents given to such unmeaning sentimentality; and like Tudor, Gertrude felt nipped by the frost of uncongeniality; and the Doctor was under the impression that he had entirely silenced and confuted every argument adduced; and in this pleasant delusion started on his lunar excursion, in a very mollified mood.

Some important business letters called Tudor away to Sydney, during the short period between shearing, and haymaking, and he departed on horseback very early before any one else on the farm was astir.

It was a summer's day, "so hot, so blazing hot," each said as they met. The sun rose like a ball of fire, and soon shone fiercely; the air was flickering with the moisture evaporating from the earth, which cracked in the harder clays, and crumbled into dust, in the lighter parts; the cattle, and sheep retired to sheltered glades, and slept. The Magpies assembled in the thick trees, and chatted in a confidential tone; a few blacks who had come up from the camp, to visit Nanny, rolled themselves in blankets, or Opossum-skin cloaks, and slept on a sunny bank; in every tree, myriads of Locusts sung, and chirped their ceaseless shrill whirr, and fell a ready prey to birds, or ants; the air was impregnated by a sharp peculiar smell, a scorched smoky smell; and there was a bright blue cloud, just a little peculiar column, which seemed to augment as the day advanced.

Gertrude was languid, and oppressed; it was her first Australian summer, and when she took her work, and sat down to make an apron for Mrs. Doherty, the needle bent, then broke, was renewed, then the cotton knotted, and she sat dreaming, and listless, when Kitty entered.

"How hot!" "Isn't it warm?" were the mutual salutations.

"Will it be like this all the summer?"

"No, not every day; the bush is afire."

"The bush on fire! Oh, what can we do?"

"Don't be frightened: it's away in the gullies."

Gertrude knew that every thing that did not happen on the farm, was

assigned to the vague locality of the gullies, so she was not quite satisfied, and inquired if they were far.

“Well, I think that fire's a good bit off, but you look out to-night when it's dark, and see how red it looks—my word! what a fire we had three years ago!”

“Was any one burnt?”

“No: but a field of wheat down at Muttee Muttee was; and two score of sheep out at Jimbindoon. Mr. Tudor was up near a week, riding from place to place, beating out the fires, and changing the sheep. First it broke out at Jimbindoon, then ran down to old Tom's water holes, then it turned 'cause of the water, and ran down to Inkersole's, then cross the stoney wheat paddock, and on to the farm again, we thought we should all have been burnt. You can't think how thin Mr. Tudor got, day and night he was at work, I don't think he eat, or slept, oh! eight days at least, mother kept a pot of tea always ready, and when she'd see him galloping by, she'd fill a basin, and take out to him, and see how he did drink: it was so hot you know: he was quite black, with being always in the smoke.”

Gertrude looked far from re-assured, and walked to look out of the window. Kitty came to her side.

“You have not been down to see Betsey, since she married.”

“No, I was ill when she first came to Muttee Muttee, you know.”

“I was down there yesterday.”

“Were you?” Gertrude was interested in spite of herself: she had not heard of Charley since he left; certainly she had not expected to do so.

Kitty, who perhaps had some little shrewdness in surmising, went on unquestioned.

“Betsey told me they had word that Charley was well, but not coming down yet; not till after Christmas; but mother will be wanting me, and I came up to ask for a few cherries.”

“You had better gather them, they are nice in the hedge now; good bye!”

Left alone, Gertrude took up her work again, but was too restless to do much; the fire alarmed her, and she found she was repeating aloud “not till after Christmas;” and she brushed a tear from her cheek.

When darkness did come, there were apparent, not one, but five, vast portals of burning red, in a solid mass, like sombre grey masonry, arching over head, from which glared out rays of light, as from a luminous world beyond. The air was still, hot, and close; the tree frogs shrieked by the water, and the grasshopper chirped. The smoke was sensibly thicker, and when Gertrude retired to rest, it was with a troubled heart, which yet was solaced by committing its burdens to Him “who comforteth us in all our distresses.” “Is He not stronger than the flames; than death itself; shall

ought endanger us without his permission?" then gratefully, and in faith she repeated. "No, 'nothing can separate us from the love of God, in Christ.' "

Morning came, still hot and oppressive, while the smoke obscured every distant object, Mrs. Doherty looked out of the window often, and wished Tudor was at home. Gertrude watched the countenances of her companions to ascertain their danger.

"Where is the fire, Nanny?"

The black woman scanned the smoky horizon, and shook her head.

"Where is the camp?" pursued Gertrude.

"Blackfeller move camp down along ob river missus; fire come up gullie him bin say burra berri, to fire down along ob scrub, the blackfellow move camp, murry quick."

"Yes?"

"Yes."

"I am afraid that fire burra berri now."

"I belibe so, Missus."

Both women looked sorrowfully at each other, and turned an apprehensive glance at the high dull forest, between them and the flames; the grass was white, and parched with the hot sun, it was an unusually sultry season, and very dry; there had been no rain for many weeks.

"I wish Tudor was here," said a voice behind them, and Gertrude turned, as Mrs. Doherty's hand was laid upon her shoulder.

"I have just sent Lakin on horseback, to see if the fire has come on the sheep run."

"Do you apprehend any danger?"

"To us?"

"Yes, to the farm."

"No, none; at least, none at present; if the hill takes fire—"

"In which quarter is the wind?"

"Directly towards us: watch how the smoke drives."

Towards noon, the roar of the flames could be distinguished, and the leaves of the orchard trees quivered at the breath of the hot smoke. The ripe wheat lay between the bush and the garden: a spark falling there, and the whole twenty acres would be in a blaze.

As night approached, the sun was shut out from their view, and a thick darkness veiled the earth; the wind rose, and carried up columns of sparks and blazes; then died down to a perfect calm: again arose, each time driving the flames before it with frightful rapidity, till a wall of fire shut in the farm.

Mrs. Doherty and Gertrude stood in silent anguish in the side verandah,

and Nanny squatted in the yard: all eagerly attentive to the progress of the fire. The families from the huts formed groups, weeping and awestruck; here was a mother, with her babe in her arms, and half a dozen sobbing children clinging round her skirts, and hiding their heads from the choking smoke; there, another stood sentinel over her household treasures: some were praying, some weeping, some silent: the men were hurrying here and there in uncertainty, with no one to take the lead; here a few, kept together by a master spirit, vigorously swept back the flames with green boughs; and there, others ran with pails of water, half emptied by their speed, and dashed it upon some building, or on the devouring flames, which illuminated the whole scene.

Presently a horseman came speeding up the path, leaning forward over the horse's neck, as if his impatience overleapt its reckless speed. The females shrieked, "Tudor," and ran into the yard as he sprang from the saddle, he threw an arm round each, pressing them to him for an instant: then he dashed into the stable, saddled two horses, and returned to them.

"Gertrude," he said, calmly, very calmly, "if the fire catches the wheat, take out the horses, let Nanny have Benbow, and do you and Mrs. Doherty mount the other two, which I have saddled ready, ride to the road, leading to Rocky Creek. You know it?"

"Yes?"

"Mark the lowest line of fire, dash through; you must wrap wet blankets round you, don't fear, and then gallop across the black burnt ground: there is no danger there, only from falling trees: get down to the long swamp, and stay in the water."

"You?"

"I will be with you if I can, but most likely, I cannot. Put trust in God, Gertrude. 'Tis time to try if we have faith. If I am not with you—if I should not come—then go to the road, the public road. I trust to you, Gertrude, be firm."

Then he left them.

"Oh thank God! thank God, that he has come," cried Mrs. Doherty, sobbing hysterically, and clasping her hands: but Gertrude took the meaning of his words, "If I do not come," and she was silent with agony.

'Mr. Tudor,' 'the master,' 'the super,' cried one, or other, as he joined the agitated men, calmed them by his firmness, and stimulated them by his activity; regular bands were formed; parties to beat out the flames from the neighbourhood of the ripe wheat, and the buildings: a line of men and boys were stationed from the creek to the woolshed, passing buckets of water which were judiciously applied, and kept the inflammable bark roof, and wooden walls cool, and moist: in the manner, the huts were protected;

some of the women even joined in the service, while Gertrude filled large cans with weak run and water, and sent by Lakin, round among the scorched, thirsty creatures, who quaffed a pint as if it were a spoonful, and returned refreshed to their labour.

Morning broke upon a scene of funeral blackness, and desolation, but the danger was passed. The prayers of all were answered.

Gertrude and Nanny prepared breakfast in the long kitchen; and Mrs. Doherty found linen rags to bind up sundry burns: the whole party were perfectly spent with fatigue; the men fell asleep over their beef, and bread, and threw themselves on the kitchen floor, with open mouths, and loud snores.

“Won't you rest, Ned?” said Mrs. Doherty, as Tudor passed. He smiled faintly, and shook his head. “Do, for one hour. The sofa in the back parlor is pretty cool, do.”

“No, thank you, I must go down to Muttee Muttee, the fire is running that way, and they have few hands. I shall get back in an hour, or so: let the men sleep, poor fellows, I may need them again: by-the-bye where is Ben, I did not see him.”

“Him bin go 'n washhouse, Mis'er Ned: him too much jerrau,” said Nanny.

Tudor's lip curled in contempt.

“I wish you would stop; well, if all is right there, won't you rest after you come back.”

“I must ride over to Owen. The sheep run is right, Lakin says.”

He turned into the washhouse, and brought out the coward, Ben, with little ceremony, and bade him feed, and wash the horses, and have a fresh one saddled for him on his return.

Mrs. Doherty watched him go on his neighbourly errand with moist eyes, and marked the sharp lines of his scorched, sooty figure. Happily, the strength of the fire was spent, and it died out in a few days; leaving nature in mourning for her children; and many a seared and hollow tree, to tell the tale for centuries to come; while others formed a pile of charcoal, and ashes.

The harvest began, and ended in peace; the drays brought a servant; and Nanny returned to the camp, quite tired of civilization, and conventionalities for the time; the bush fires on the far horizon gave them no uneasiness, for nearer home there was absolutely nothing to burn: then came Christmas, with his brows wreathed in roses and lilies; and after the autumn rains such a fresh shoot of green, that the sweeping destruction of the fire was half forgotten.

Chapter XIII.

“Alas! that e're a boon conferred,
Should wreath the donor's brow with ill.”

* * * * *

Yet sad perversity of fate;
Too oft is kindness unregarded;
Too often with unholy hate,
Or cruel treachery rewarded.”

MRS. E. CAUDLE.

“Tudor.”

“Yes Ma'am.” He thrust the letter he held in his hand, into his pocket, and joined Mrs. Doherty in the office.

“Look at this—read it aloud.” She held an open letter towards him, and paced up and down, while he obeyed, and read.

“Dear Madam,

I am probably unknown to you by name, but I am the son of the late Dr. Doherty's sister. I have just landed at Sydney, having taken a fancy to visit the mighty colony of Botany Bay, and have some idea of settling in the bush. I shall take a run up, shortly, as I shall want a little colonial experience,” &c., &c.

Tudor's brows worked, but he said nothing.

“Well?” demanded Mrs. Doherty impatiently.

“Did you ever hear of this Mr. Batally?”

“Yes, yes, he's all right so far. What do you think?”

“He can gain colonial experience here, grazing, or farming, or—”

“You are very provoking.”

Tudor bowed, and smiled quietly.

“I don't like the style of the letter,” remarked Mrs. Doherty, taking it up.

“He's rather fresh,” suggested the other.

“I know that, but he need not be impudent.”

“Is he? he thinks to seem off-handed, and ‘colonial,’ probably.”

“Well, I give my nephew into your teaching, that's all.”

“Thank you for the charge,” he replied, and retired laughing.

‘Shortly’ being an indefinite term, no set preparations could be made for

the visitor: although a certain amount of expectation fluttered the females. An English gentleman fresh from home; these were alarming considerations, the place would look rough, the servants inefficient, their own manners hardly savouring of the West-end, and the Court. Tudor settled the business at once, when taken into confidence, by saying:

“Those who are not pleased with you as you are, are not worth pleasing.”

“But we are far from perfect, I fear.”

“Of course you are, but be convinced, an action, or a course of conduct, is right, and be in earnest, and do it with every power of mind and body, *be*, not seem to be; you are not to be judged by another's conscience, you are not, in a measure, to be judged by your own. As to manners, a kind heart, and well regulated mind, will always prevent your erring; the conventionalities which strangle truth and right, it would be well to my mind, if they were unknown in a new country. Let us be free; free, not of proper laws and lawgivers, but of puerile aims and fears, and of that monster tyrant, which sees not the man as he is, but only as he possesses property, or artificial polish.”

“Are you a liberalist?”

“If by that you mean a leveller, I am not. Not that I would keep the ignorant man ignorant, because he is so now, or the poor man poor; I would that each should rise as he has ability; if the rich man lacks mind and principle, it is well that he should sink. Understand, not the upsetting of principles and classes, not rebellion and chaos, only I would see that each should be honoured for himself; let him be the great man, who is great, whether he be rich, or poor; and let the government and its laws be strictly honoured and obeyed, with our Queen at the head of them.”

“Yes, I love liberty, but not rebellion. Rebellion is the field which petty vagrants and enthusiasts plough with death, and water with blood, to sow their pride and avarice in.”

“What a discussion; rebellion, death, tyranny, and avarice. 'Pon my word, a goodly list,” joined in Dr. Bower, who came up unperceived.

“Oh! you know Tudor, doctor; he is a thorough radical, I believe, though he always puzzles me so in his discussions, that I don't know what he means. I am true Church and State.”

“Well done,” returned the Doctor, shaking Mrs. Doherty's hand, and joining in Tudor's laugh at her confused idea of the subject.

“Well my little patient, how now?”

“Quite well,” returned Gertrude, smiling, and returning the warm shake of the hand.

“We are expecting a visitor, Doctor,” said Mrs. Doherty.

“Indeed! a young gentleman?”

“Yes, have you seen him?”

“I put a young man on the road here, but came through the scrub myself, to see a sick black gin down at the camp. A visit would be well bestowed there, Gertrude, it seems the woman was badly burnt, and she is sinking from exhaustion; the wounds were long healing; she has no disease, but great weakness; a few clean old clothes, and some flour, and etceteras would be acceptable.”

“I will attend to it this very evening.”

“That's right, my dear; she might recover with care.”

While they were still discussing the case, the expected visitor arrived: in appearance, he was a mixture of fashion, and recent neglect; polite mannered, yet saying and doing insolent things; wearing a well cared for moustache, and imperial, and an old Californian hat, bent out of all shape, as if it had been used for boys to throw stones at; plated spurs, and rough water-proof boots.

Mrs. Doherty's quick eye took in the inventory at a glance, Dr. Bower's more leisurely. Tudor appeared perfectly to read his character; and Gertrude at a loss, withdrew to assist Marianne in preparing a suitable supper.

After making his bow to the party, Mr. Batally unbuckled a series of carpet, and saddle bags, and marched into the house, and depositing them on chairs and tables, without much ceremony, ordered Lakin to attend to his horse.

“And fellow, rub him down, for he's had a pretty stiff day's work,” he added.

“How far have you come?” inquired Mrs. Doherty, with a great effort at geniality, leading the way into the parlour.

“From a wretched place styled an hotel, the ‘Squatters’ Hotel, or some such cognomen. Well, I am tired,” he added, and sunk down on a sofa.

“Not used to riding, perhaps,” suggested his aunt.

“I have ridden some thousands of miles in the ‘pampas’ alone, besides other places, I pique myself on understanding horsemanship, and horseflesh, not a little.”

“Tudor, will you stay to tea?” said Mrs. Doherty, stepping out of the French window.

He bowed his assent, for although, since Gertrude's illness, he had never done so, and avoided the house as much as possible, he was just then engaged in an interesting debate with the doctor, respecting an accident which had occurred on the station, necessitating amputation, which task had fallen to Tudor to perform, and he was anxiously discussing the subject, in case of such a responsibility devolving upon him again.

Mr. Batally was very chatty, and devoted himself to Mrs. Doherty, and Gertrude, with a good deal of gallantry. It was difficult to conceive what he had been: he had not an independent fortune; therefore, to have reached some thirty years, he must have done something. His hands were too white to be acquainted with labour: then he talked of foreign parts, in a style to preclude the idea of his having led an office life; five years here, and five years there, and so on; it set Tudor wondering: and he began to make a mental inventory.

“A wild country this,” said Mr. Batally.

“Unlike any you have seen?” inquired Dr. Bower.

“ 'Pon my word, I know no place to compare to it; stones outside the Cherries; animals with bills; others on legs like stilts: with a degraded population.”

“There you are wrong,” abruptly interrupted Mrs. Doherty. “There are some fine, and excellent people here; many, yes thank Heaven, many hundreds.”

“I referred to the savages, they—”

“Have some excellent natural qualities; superior far to the more ingenious New Zealander, or Caffre.”

“Talking of the Caffres, reminds me of Africa; these hot days are much like such as I used to suffer under, off that coast.”

“Were you there long?”

“Five years off and on: then we went to India, and were there two years, Tudor, (mentally,) ‘seven years.’

“Then we had another two years off the Gold Coast.”

Tudor, ‘nine.’

Mrs. Doherty here made some inquiries about his recent journey; and Tudor tried to feel patient under the abuse heaped upon his country; feeling his companion incapable of an argument on the subject. Mr. Batally was clever at caricaturing; and described his last night at the Squatters' Hotel, and two clerical travellers he had met there, with sundry witty additions.

“You have no lack of ‘the cloth’ I find,” he concluded.

“That is unfortunately, our greatest want, if by ‘the cloth,’ you mean Ministers of Religion.”

“I do—but two for one district, where you have about half a dozen residents, is pretty fair, I think. Eh, Miss Gonthier?”

“We have no minister here,” she returned, gravely.

“Supposing Sir, those two Ministers did belong to one District, that district probably extending over forty, or fifty miles, and containing a numerous though scattered population. Supposing every Sabbath, each Minister preached twice, at different places, ten, or twelve miles apart, it

would still be impossible for many to attend; they must therefore go without instruction.”

“Not if the Parson visits his people, Mr. Tudor.”

“Even in that case, although he travel all day, and every day, he could not see, and briefly converse with the majority of his parishioners: the roads are bad, travelling interrupted by many causes, and some time for study and reflection, is indispensable. Supposing the two Ministers were of different denominations, their work would be doubled; because each must go over all, and not half of the ground; that is, to see the people once a week, he must journey some hundreds of miles.”

Mr. Batally shrugged his shoulders and dismissed the subject, by an anecdote of a Spanish Priest he had known at Madrid, and spoke of a sixteen years residence there.

“Sixteen!”

Dr. Bower looked as if peculiarly enjoying himself; and wore one of his satirical smiles; gently urging on Mr. Batally, and relishing the conflict between politeness and patriotism, he knew Tudor was enduring, notwithstanding his composed air: while Mrs. Doherty joined in defence of the country with some warmth and impatience.

Mr. Batally interspersed his accusations, and impeachments with recollections and life reaching over some fifty years; and Tudor, driven into an audible ‘ha!’ of voluminous meaning, rose, and apologised for his departure, as he had a flock of sheep to count; which operation, the visitor expressed a wish to see, and Tudor departed with his promising pupil. Mr. Batally made great efforts to count them himself, but was of course, made giddy by the stream of sheep rushing before his eyes; and in his attempts to check their speed, was thrown down on his back, and carried some few yards, then dropped, and trampled on; while as he ‘picked himself up,’ an oath reached his ears from the shepherd, for having ‘broken the count.’ He heard Tudor say with emphasis, “I will come down to-morrow evening *alone* Tom.”

“Shall we go home, or would you like to walk round the farm?” inquired the superintendent as he joined him.

Mr. Batally had, “had enough of farming for one day,” he said; and they walked home. Tudor parting from him at the door, to return to his own cottage.

Mr. Batally drew a chair near the sofa, and lounged over, watching Gertrude mending one of Mrs. Doherty's dresses.

“Do not your fingers ache with so much industry?” he inquired presently.

“No Sir,” returned Gertrude, without looking up.

“Are pianos unknown in the Bush?”

“By no means.”

“Have you one?”

Mr. Batally had not been enlightened as to the position she held in Mrs. Doherty's household; and the universal respect, and kindness shown her, rather led him astray.

“I do not play.”

“Not play! now you are joking. But you sing?”

“Very rarely.”

“Well rare things are best. I must have a song.”

“My songs are German; you would not understand them probably.”

“I should hear your charming voice.”

The polite smile was lost: for Gertrude was stooping over her needlework, and simply answered.

“My voice is not charming; and even my German songs are chiefly sacred; they are hymns.”

“What, can such a fair face look gloomy?”

“Hymns do not make me gloomy,” she returned with some astonishment; and passed round the table to snuff the candle.

“Bring your work nearer the light, you will injure your eyes, said Dr. Bower; and he placed a chair between himself and the window, in a nice quiet corner, which Gertrude quickly appropriated, enjoying the candles, and screened by the doctor at the same time; leaving Mr. Batally, who had laboured under the idea that he was making quite an impression upon the country girl, decidedly blank, and chagrined.

The general feeling of contempt between the new arrival, and the old colonists, threatened, in this instance, to run very high; although kindheartedness, and forbearance kept a smooth surface.

Winter was passing on, and Mr. Batally remained at Murrumbowrie; either, as was covertly whispered in the huts, running among the dogs at Muttee Muttee, or lounging on the sofa, paying covert compliments to Gertrude, if she were in the room; or yawning and dozing, over an old newspaper, or a cigar.

That he held New South Wales, and her inhabitants, and customs, in supreme disdain, he freely informed them: that he was not gaining Colonial, or any other experience, Tudor thought, if he said nothing; no two men could be more unlike. Tudor was habitually silent, never uttering bright sayings, and nonsense; willing to impart information, or to converse when he thought it desired, that he should do so: but very characteristically apt to commence any discussion by ‘I think.’ Mr. Batally on the contrary talked of things ‘striking’ him, he never searched them out, he never thought in the sense that Tudor did; he could be bright, and witty, but not

deep; he began every thing, but finished nothing. Tudor began less, and carried it through in spite of every obstacle. How two, so diametrically opposed, lived amicably together, puzzled Mrs. Doherty. She bore with her nephew, because he was her nephew; but she fretted under the obligation.

“After Christmas,” repeated Gertrude, as she watched the moon, slowly and gradually rising; shaking out her silver skirts over hill and dale, making the shadows more deep, and drowning the starlight; dancing on the ponds, and creeping between leaves, and curtains. “After Christmas.”—she was not musing on the subject now, as she once would; she was searching it, bringing up every hidden thought, and feeling; meeting it, and looking it in the face; humbly and courageously committing the future to God.

The past had become a dream, with all a dream's brightness, confusion, and mystery; and the future, faith gladly laid before the throne of Omnipotence, in a fervent, “Do Thou as seemest good unto Thee.”

A year or more had passed, since she first came there; since she first looked out on that Winter's evening prospect—a year that had ripened her character, and strengthened her mind; while it left the fair features with the same innocent, gentle impress; perhaps strengthened that expression: what her influence had been upon her companions of that year, she knew not; nor dreamt its power.

Never once had she heard directly of, or from Charley Inkersole—Kitty Kenlow often visited his mother, and generally after each visit, walked up to have a chat with Gertrude, to repeat such parts of their conversation as she thought might interest her. She had been there that day; she told her that Dick was going to the Abercrombie in the spring, and that the brothers were to return together: that they were going to make some arrangements about sharing the property; and then that Charley would start in life for himself. “And then Gertrude, mother says, he'll have to look out for a wife, to take care of his house;” and Kitty gave a funny look at her companion, but in Gertrude's eyes there was a clear calm light which puzzled her.

In a few days weariness began to attack Mr. Batally; he had strolled round the farm, peeped into the barn, watched the men thrashing for a few moments, taken the flail into his own hands, and narrowly escaped being killed on the spot; had mounted a horse, and galloped about for part of a day; then examined Mrs. Doherty's library, pronounced the books unreadable, and papers a week or two old, not worth opening; and then, like that highly intellectual traveller, during a wet day in some foreign town, might have replied, “*Je m'ennuis*,” when asked how he spent his time.

“Is there no such thing as a day's sport to be met with in this howling wilderness?” exclaimed he, savagely thrusting a volume of the Farmers'

Magazine into its place on the book shelves.

Gertrude only was in the room, and returned "I do not know, Sir: but Mr. Tudor could inform you."

"Mr. Batally sauntered away, with his hands in his pockets, down to the slaughter yard, where Tudor was engaged in overlooking the killing of a fat beast.

"Can a fellow get a day's sport here?" queried he, advancing.

"If you had stayed Sir, just now, you might have shot the bullock," said one of the men, rather slyly, for Mr. Batally had evidently not relished the antagonistic snorting of the companions of the fat victim, and after witnessing several fierce charges of the angry animals at the high fence, walked away, muttering something about patent caps, that he had brought from England.

The suppressed grin which passed round among the men, rather nettled the gentleman, and he looked haughtily at them. Tudor however, politely informed him that there was every probability of his doing so. "There are some fine forest Kangaroos at Jimbindoon," he said, "I saw two, last time I was there, but as I had the cattle dogs with me, they startled them away—and there are Paddy Melons in the scrub."

"What are they?"

"Small Kangaroos—we have Ducks down the creek, and in the season, no want of Snipe, and Quail. If you are inclined for a day's sport, I shall be happy to lend you my Kangaroo Dog: he is well trained, and very powerful."

"Will you join me?"

"I am too busy: but young Lewis is staying with the Staples', at Wattle-tree Flat; he has some famous dogs. I could introduce you to him, he is a pleasant fellow, and would like a little sport at any time."

Mr. Batally expressed a wish to form the acquaintance; and received a promise that the first leisure day, they would ride over in quest of him.

"There's no moon, or you might shoot hundreds of Possums in the bush," suggested one of the men.

"Are there any fish in these ponds, fellow?" imperiously inquired he.

No one chose to acknowledge the designation, and Tudor returned a negative; and proposed an evening's Eeling.

Mr. Batally gladly assented, and departed to arrange his hooks, while awaiting Tudor's leisure.

Kenlow, being an experienced hand, was pressed into the party; and Kitty having volunteered, Gertrude was easily persuaded to join; having completed her daily toils.

Tudor offered his arm to Gertrude, and Mr. Batally walked with the

sheep overseer, and his daughter.

“Did you hear that!” suddenly exclaimed Kenlow, in a tone to convey an alarm.

All paused, and listened.

It was dark, or at least, that uncertain light bordering on darkness, which renders every object twice its natural size; and bestows most unaccountable forms on it. Far away, wailed a Curlew; and a Squirrel shrieked in the forest.

“What was it?” demanded Tudor, a little sternly, for his companion's hand trembled, as it lay on his arm.

“Oh, only a Native Dog,” responded the man.

“Hold your tongue. What then if it were?”—and the party proceeded for some time in silence.

“What sort of animals are they, Kenlow?” at length inquired Mr. Batally.

“Why Sir, not unlike a Wolf—they are nasty beasts, more especially where there are many together—was I telling you about the night I came home from Dugdale's? by Jove! I thought it was a settler that time.”

“Why?”

“Well you see, I got ‘yarning’ with Dugdale, and the sun set before I left there, so I thought—”

Gertrude at that moment, stumbled into a hole, she was evidently walking with her head turned, listening to Kenlow's narrative, as he followed close behind.

“Don't mind them,” said Tudor in a low tone; “it's all romancing, to frighten Batally. There is a Wood Duck—do you hear the ducks?” raising his voice, “there is some game for you, Sir.”

“Thank you; that was a duck was it?—well, Kenlow?”

“Well, as I was a saying, Sir, I thought I had better push on, having to take the rations down to the sheep run, on the morrow. I was on the old bay mare; when I came to that little turning in the road, she stopped suddenly, it was no use my spurring, and flogging, till presently, off she went like the wind, kicking out with both feet, like a fury, and such a yelling there was behind us! so I turned, and there were no less than seven native dogs—thank goodness, the foal is with us, thinks I, and in a moment, they were on it, and tore it to pieces, afore the mare's eyes.”

“Bless me!” ejaculated Mr. Batally.

“'Pon my word Sir, I could scarcely keep my seat, she was so furious; but it was no use, so I clapped the spurs into her, and went as hard as the mare could go, homewards; the dogs flying at me on each side.”

“You had better say, they pulled you off the saddle,” exclaimed Tudor.

“No Sir, it was only the calf-skin saddle-cloth, that they pulled from

under me,” returned he, with imperturbable coolness, “and I managed to escape them, that time.”

Such is a specimen of the tales, which the old colonist, of a certain class, loves to scare the emigrant with; and while Kenlow dilated on all the attendant horrors of the case, Tudor gave Gertrude some more reliable anecdotes, and descriptions of these animals.

Meanwhile, they had neared the scene of their intended eel-fishing; a deep pond, with low, loamy banks, not two yards above the water, and much pierced by the burrows of the Water Mole, and Turtle. A few Swamp Oaks, matted with flood drift, grew round; and a little behind, lay a heavily timbered level. Kenlow quickly collected some dry sticks, and bark, and lighted a fire, as he had an idea that its light attracted the eels to the surface; and Gertrude, and Kitty placed themselves beside it: the former, at Tudor's suggestion, was well covered with a veil; and the eager hum of mosquitoes, which even at that advanced season, had not disappeared from the vicinity of the creek, gave evidence to the wisdom of the precaution.

The serious business of the evening was immediately commenced; lines were baited, and laid, and the party sat down to await the result: now in earnest, several native dogs uttered their dismal howl in the distance, and the dogs at the farm took up the dolorous burden, prolonging the discordant peal.

Mr. Batally was evidently uncomfortable, the mosquitoes tormented him, in spite of a cigar, and a branch kept in active motion: the growling of a Native Cat, and the cries of Opossums in the bush, did not tend to re-assure him; the fire was frequently renewed, and as the wind drove the smoke and flames from side to side, it did not prove an agreeable adjunct: but as the girls uttered no complaint, and expressed no fears, he scorned to do so. As for Kitty, she was a courageous girl, and knew there was nothing to fear; and the tranquil air of Tudor, as he stood with his arms folded across his breast, watching the line by the light of the fire, was enough to dispel all Gertrude's timidity; and as occasionally he turned his eyes on her, she could smile very cheerfully.

Tudor had proposed simply setting the lines, and leaving them till the morning: but Kenlow, who was well acquainted with the place, so confidently promised them an eel before an hour, that all assented to his proposal, to await the time. Presently the line jerked, and twisted, and Tudor swung out a fine eel.

“We will have larger yet,” remarked Kenlow, “though that a'nt bad for a beginning: but they grow a great size in this country.

Kitty had provided a basket, and now brought it into requisition.

By the end of the hour, their success had been such, that after fresh

baiting, and securing the lines, they returned home; in a mood to enjoy a cheerful hearth, and a cup of good tea.

Tudor however, had accounts to make up, and parted from Gertrude at the door; and the Kenlows walked home, leaving the others to enjoy the comforts of the evening repast, while Mrs. Doherty listened to the recital of their adventures.

“Mr. Tudor has promised to introduce me to a Squatter, who is visiting at your neighbours',” said Mr. Batally.

“The Inkersoles?”

“No, Mr. Staples.”

“Ah! that is Lewis: he is going to marry Anne Shettle, Mrs. Staples' sister.”

“What sort of people are they?”

“Shettle and the old woman were quite ignorant: but they worked hard, and made money; and gave the girls, what they thought a good education: they all were down in Sydney for years; and the result was a little wool work, and bad music; and like many others in her position, old Mother Shettle fell into the idea of keeping them ladies; so slaved herself, and let the girls be utterly idle.” Mrs. Doherty spoke in a tone of actual vexation.

“Are the old people living?”

“No, the property is left among the girls; and they all live at the farm.”

Mrs. Doherty was disposed to launch out into sweeping censures of the mistaken kindness of the old people; and as Mr. Batally was expecting shortly to make the acquaintance of the family, he was interested in all the minutiae; and Gertrude betook herself to her household duties.

“Did you tell me you should like a station on one of the rivers?” inquired Tudor, the following day.

Mr. Batally took the cigar from his mouth, and replied in the affirmative.

“There is a splendid run advertised in this week's papers: I know it, if I were in a position to purchase, I should not let the opportunity pass: it is on the Murray.”

The gentleman did not look as if much obliged for the information; and inquired when it was to be sold.

“In the beginning of next month; and the terms are very liberal: did you not observe it in the papers? It is called Gunyong.”

“No.”

A slight expression of surprise elevated the brows of the superintendent.

“I cannot be bored looking over the advertisements.”

“Oh! very well,” returned Tudor, in that polite tone of indifference, which covers a sudden revelation of some hitherto concealed fact.

Mr. Batally had requested him to be sure and let him know, if anything

turned up. "Something worth having, Tudor, not a 'bandicoot run' as you call it," said he in a rather grand tone.

Tudor understood the sort of thing, and took some trouble in making inquiries on the subject: but always some defect interfered to prevent the purchase. One was too wet, and another too dry: one was all gullies, and another all mountains: so each was unfit. After this, however, Tudor's zeal suddenly flagged, and by common consent, the subject appeared to fall into oblivion.

Tudor's attention, was just about this time called off by the arrival of the teams from Sydney; and among other things, they brought a family of German emigrants, who had been hired by Mrs. Doherty's agent in Sydney.

"Gertrude" said Tudor, looking in at the pantry door, "will you come here, if you please, for a few moments."

She complied.

It was just dark, and the drays stood outside the yard. As they approached them, the sound of foreign voices made her start.

"Who is speaking German, Mr. Tudor?" inquired she, in a voice of trembling excitement; for the sound recalled her parents, and her childhood's home rose up before her. The old English cottage, with its smooth thatched roof, and ivy-covered chimneys, and the wide hearth; and the smell of Wall-flowers, and Southernwood, coming in through the windows; and just beyond the little garden, the hedge rows round the Squire's fields: and the mossy spot, where the fragrant Violets grew; and that particular bank, where the first Snowdrop peeped through the cold coverlet of the winter's earth. And dearer than all, stood before her, the kind mother, in her simple, neat attire, with her mild eye, and active hand, which ever kept disorder, and bustling activity, that hand-maiden of mismanagement, from the peaceful home.

She saw too, the thin, drooping form of the Clockmaker, with the fires of genius, and insanity, kindling in his eye; and she heard again, the evening prayer of that mother, for her household, and the hymns of praise, which she taught her child to sing, and the words that she made her often repeat, as she impressed upon her, the fear of the Lord, and the promises of God of old, to Levi, "My covenant was with him of life and peace, and I give them to him, for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips, he walked with me, in peace and equity, and did turn away from iniquity." Like the melody of music heard again, after the lapse of years, were the voices of the strangers.

Tudor drew her trembling arm firmer within his, as they advanced to the teams.

“Will you act as interpreter? I sent to Sydney for a shepherd, and Mr. Maxwell has sent me a German and his family; and very awkwardly they cannot speak English, nor we their language.”

Gertrude looked a little nervous; her knowledge was rather misty, for want of use; but their delight on hearing her kind “good evening,” repaid the exertion.

“It is so painful” said the woman, “not to be able to make any one understand us; my baby is ill, and I could not get any food for it.”

“What has it done then?”

“The drayman saw it was ill, and procured some milk for me a few times.”

The conversation was here interrupted by Tudor, requesting Gertrude to translate his wishes and directions, and after doing so, he offered her his arm to conduct her back to the house.

“They will soon learn to speak our language: foreigners acquire English, more readily than we do their language.”

“How can that be?”

“They have less bashfulness I believe, and so are not deterred by the fear of making blunders. “The child is ill, is it not?”

“Yes very, I fear it will not live: where are they going, will you keep them on the farm?”

“No I cannot do that, I must send them to Jimbindoon, some miles distant. The man—what was he called?”

“Gueslin.”

“So it was. Gueslin can, after a while, get the hut-keeper to take charge of his flock, now and then, and come up for a little while, to exchange a few words with you; if you wish it.”

“Oh! thank you,” and she looked up gratefully, “I love their language.”

“I understand the feeling.”

She saw that he did, and that he would take some pains to arrange matters, so that she might have the promised pleasure.

The account of the invalid babe, awakened Mrs. Doherty's sympathy, and a basket was filled with delicacies for it, and carried to their temporary lodgings by Gertrude, and the servant; and long after all else had sunk to sleep on the farm, Gertrude sat in her little room, busied in adding to the scanty wardrobe of the little creature.

These little acts of kindness, how trifling their cost, and how grateful they are to the heart of the sad, or the stranger: how they carpet over the rough ways of life, and blunt its thorns!

It was not lightly, or thoughtlessly, that Gertrude had said “Let us be good angels, Kitty, and surround our path with happiness,” but it was the

desire which sprung from the perusal of her bible, and from the hour of private devotion. That old German Bible lay open by her side, as she stitched up pinafores, and robes for the feeble, wayworn child; and she traced those lines, which her mother's hand had placed, to mark the passages she wished her daughter to remember: and now one of those passages seemed to speak of that mother, and say to her "The sun shall no more be thy light by day, neither for brightness, shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee, an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

During the Germans' brief stay at Murrumbowrie, Gertrude was able to cheer, and assist them greatly; as interpreter, to explain to Gueslin his new duties, and to comfort the heart of Salome; while the improving looks of the little babe, were almost as much an object of satisfaction to her, and Mrs. Doherty, as to the parents.

"I feared it would have died. One grave is sufficient on the farm," and Mrs. Doherty shuddered, for her husband was interred there, in a quiet, grassy nook, where Light-wood, and Mimosa trees grew, and where the Butter-cup, and Birds-eye waved their slender stems, and caught the dew in their chalices—but it was lonely; and the Wood-robin, and Creeper uttered their clear notes there; and the timid Curlew peeped between the white rails. Gertrude knew the spot, she had been there more than once, but always the grass in the small enclosure was kept mown, and the rails white painted; and she knew that it was Tudor's hand which did it, for Mrs. Doherty never went there.

During the bright sunshine, a few days afterwards, when the sharp frost had melted, and a gentle, mild air fanned the few brown leaves, hanging sadly from the branches of the Cape Oaks, and shook the glossy acorns from their cups, Gertrude was engaged among the Bee Hives, feeding the insects; when Mr. Batally joined her.

"What are you doing?" he inquired.

Gertrude was particularly engaged adjusting the plate of sugar and water, and simply replied,

"Feeding the Bees, Sir," without looking up.

"What may that be for? they should gather honey enough for themselves."

"Their honey is frozen," she said with the same quiet tone.

The Bees were buzzing about pretty thickly, and Mr. Batally withdrew a few steps, calling "you had better come away Miss Gertrude, or you will be stung."

She however had no fear, and remained where she was, filling and covering with net sundry dishes of syrup, and placing them before the hives; while a joyful hum of grateful anticipation rewarded her. Presently all were supplied, and then she stepped back to take a better view. The gentleman joined her.

“It is a beautiful day, Miss Gertrude.”

“Very.”

“Your favorites appear to enjoy your gifts: but any thing must be sweeter that you touch.”

Gertrude did not hear, apparently; she was still regarding her bees.

“Will you not confer a favor on me? will you not allow me to take you for a walk?”

“No, thank you, I am busy.”

“But business cannot be of such importance, that it cannot wait.”

Gertrude was silent.

“You went, the other day, to the sheep-folds with Kitty, and Mr. Tudor, and said you derived much pleasure from the walk.”

She bowed slightly her assent.

“Why then, will you not favor me? Has he all your regards?”

“I have some work to do for Mrs. Doherty.”

“Hang it, let her wait.”

Gertrude flushed, and answered with some warmth, “No Sir, I could not take my pleasure, (supposing it were a pleasure,) when she required my services.”

“Supposing it were a pleasure,” reiterated the gentleman, in a piqued tone: “then I presume it is not so. Is that what I am to understand?”

Gertrude thought it safest to be silent; and took up her pitcher to go.

“Stop,” said he, quickly; “will you not go with me?”

“I cannot, Sir.”

“Why?”

“I have given you a reason.”

“You think a deal too much of yourself,” retorted he, meanly, and hotly.

Gertrude flushed, but stepped on in silence.

“And Mrs. Doherty!” pursued Mr. Batally, “What is she, but a Convict?”

His companion started, and turned on him, eyes expressive of so much doubt, anguish, and horror, that involuntarily, he shrunk back abashed; while Gertrude walked quickly to the house.

“Oh! how could he? how could he?” she could only repeat, while the blinding tears, despite of her exertions, filled her eyes. The being she had reposed such confidence in, and loved so tenderly, could she doubt her purity; could she believe her a criminal? Why could he plant such doubts?

how cruel, how unmanly.

Ever is the human heart prone to build some human altar, on which to offer the sacrifice of love; on which to pour out the fragrant incense of trust, admiration, and honor: but when that altar crumbles into dust, when it is proved that it was insufficient to bear the weight of that sacrifice, and before which respect can no longer bow, and offer homage, how frightful is the revulsion; the human idol falls from its pedestal to the earth, and the devotee weeps.

Once again, was Gertrude drinking of the bitter cup; she longed to analyse its contents, and seek a tonic from its bitters: but her attention was required, and she dared not exhibit her emotion; least of all would she permit Mr. Batally to suspect the blank, and desolation he had caused. She could only think by stealth, and at intervals.

As she reflected upon the exemplary life Mrs. Doherty led, her integrity, and purity of principles, she vainly wearied herself by asking, what could have been her crime? And if she had erred, that error must have been deeply repented of, and steadily avoided: and shall not the penitent be restored to a place in society? Surely so. One, infinitely pure and holy, bade "him who was without sin to throw the first stone," and where shall the sinless hand be found?

But she longed to set the matter at rest; and half determined, to apply to Tudor; but she did not often see him; he was constantly employed; though by watching, she might catch him when he came to the office, or tool house, but she could not break in upon him with such a question.

Her sensitive spirit shrank from it, though in all cases of perplexity, the instinctive thought was to apply to him, and she knew from his kind, grave manner that it gave him pleasure that she should do so.

Chapter XIV.

“The hounds ran swiftly through the Woods,
The nimble deere to take,
That with their cryes, the hills and dales,
An echo shrill did make.”

CHEVY-CHASE.

A little ashamed perhaps of the disclosure he had made, Mr. Batally pressed Tudor to fulfil his promise of introducing him to Mr. Lewis, and the two accordingly rode over to Wattletree Flat, a distance of some miles.

The Mimosa, from which the farm took its name, grew in dense scrubs over the hills, that abutted upon the level occupied by the cultivation, and homestead. The latter was a collection of slab buildings, white-washed, and shingled; but far from presenting an imposing appearance: while huge rambling barked sheds of hay, and wheat, backed up the cottages, and at least added the promise of plenty to the scene.

Tudor led the way into the yard, and dismounting, they entered one of the principal buildings: here they found Mrs. Staples, and her youngest sister, Ellen, a fine young girl, just growing up to womanhood. The greeting was cordial on both sides, and although Mr. Batally was received with some little embarrassment, which betrayed itself in apparent reserve, the visitors were presently seated, and conversing on the subject of the call.

“Mr. Lewis, and John are out at present”, said Mrs. Staples, “but if you could stay to-night, Sir, they will be home about sunset; and you could go kangarooing, the first thing in the morning.”

Mr. Batally assented.

Tudor inquired after her sisters, and found that they were out riding with the gentlemen.

“They have gone to the gullies, to look after some heifers, which strayed the week before last, Mr. Tudor.”

“Rough riding for them: but Miss Jane is a famous horse-woman, I know. Do you remember the time she helped me yard that mob of young cattle, which I brought off my run? I was quite surprised; the dogs did not work well, and I was having a deal of trouble with them, up and down the ranges, when Miss Jane came to my aid. I fancy I see her now, whistling the dogs, and cracking her stockwhip.” Tudor laughed as he spoke, and the females joined him.

“She is very wild,” said her sister, with approval, rather than otherwise.

“I have a new schoolmaster, Mr. Tudor.”

“Indeed, he suits you better than the last, I hope.”

“Yes, he is a fine scholar, Mr. Tudor. I expect the children to make great progress at their books, now. Would you like to look in at them, before you go?”

Tudor expressing a desire, the mother led the way to the hut appropriated to the use of the schoolmaster; and Ellen, who had been embarrassed by the consciousness of being untidy, gladly escaped, to make some improvements to her attire, and to seek for some music, anticipating being asked to play the piano, in the evening.

The education which Mrs. Doherty so severely rated, had not been of that sound quality which, under any circumstances, is a blessing: it had been of a character rather to injure than otherwise.

Suffered to run wild till they had attained some twelve years, they were then committed to an inferior school in Sydney, “to be accomplished,” as Mrs. Shettle said: but what the next four years had accomplished, was debateable.

Mrs. Doherty's summary had not been altogether incorrect; although a little spoilt wool, and a few errors against harmony, were not the worst of their attainments. Their active, bustling mother had concluded that ‘gentility’ consisted in exemption from all occupations, therefore her daughters became completely indolent; and not being sufficiently enlightened to derive amusement from books, and having no manual employments, became listless, and almost unhappy; relieved in the case of Jane, by an exuberant spirit, which led her into manly pursuits, for want of some feminine occupation.

They were of the class who patronised Dugdale's daughters, because they could not do their own needle work: in fact, their misguided education had robbed them of all a woman's true happiness; that which springs from duties fulfilled, and competency for her station in life.

The droning of youthful voices over the doings of Peter Careful, or some such ancient worthy, of spelling book notoriety, guided the visitors to the schoolroom: and Mrs. Staples opened the door, and revealed a group of healthy young people, with cheeks like ruddy winter apples; and attire, at least in the boys' case, bearing the cut of the travelling bush Tailor; indeed, that individual might, at the moment, be seen seated at a window across the yard, stitching away.

The new schoolmaster was duly introduced, he was a man of middle height, rather well dressed, with a large ring on his finger, and a watch chain crossing his gay satin waist-coat.

Tudor read the man's countenance with dissatisfaction; the eye which

never met a steady gaze, the attempt at learned conversation, and the low phrases intermingled, stamped the character of the man, to one so accustomed to close observation. It was to him, distressing to look at the little fair haired girl, with her wooden doll's head peeping from under her pinafore; and round upon the three fine little boys, and remember how thoughtlessly they were committed to the tuition of a man, perhaps of dishonourable, and impure mind, to mould those tender hearts, and to sow in the unoccupied fallow, the seed which should bring forth either the thistle, or the golden grain.

Mrs. Staples was evidently quite overcome by a few Latin phrases, and the assuming manners of the new schoolmaster.

"I see you have Hans at work there," said Tudor, looking across the window, where the little German tailor sat. This was after the children's books had been admired, and the sums on the slates duly noticed.

"Yes, he has been here a fortnight; Staples brought up some pieces of tweed, and fustian, and he has been making them up," returned Mrs. Staples.

"We are wanting him down our way."

"Shall I tell him, Mr. Tudor?"

"Thank you, I will speak to him, myself." He crossed the yard to do so.

"Well Hans, almost done your job?"

"Ya, Mister Tudor, dis is de last."

"Very good; will you come down to Murrumbowrie? our people are in want of you."

The tailor ran his hand through his hair, as if to set it still more on end; and made sundry grimaces.

"What now? you do not want to go drinking before you begin the next job?"

"No, no, Mither, I have not been drunkse for one week," returned Hans, in a tone of injured innocence: for his interrogator spoke sternly.

Hans was a little square faced man, rather florid, from his free potations, quite a character: always wandering from farm to farm, following his trade, and looked upon by the steadier class, as a nuisance, and among the *bon vivants* as a droll, cheerful creature.

Tudor arranged that he was to come down for a few days, to do what was required among the people; and strongly forbade the introduction of spirits, which the little tailor promised, quite awed by his tall commanding companion; though without the slightest intention of fulfilling his promise.

Tudor presently departed, leaving Mr. Batally to amuse the ladies, or be amused by them, till the return of the riding party.

Mr. Lewis cheerfully undertook to conduct Mr. Batally to the chase; and

provided him with a horse trained to the sudden turns, and incessant leaps, necessary to avoid standing trees, and clear fallen ones, in pursuing the kangaroo: three splendid dogs were added, and at daybreak next day they started.

“The best place for ‘foresters’ is the stringy bark ranges, towards the gullies,” said Lewis, “we are sure to find some there, and the ground is good for riding over.”

They were saddling their horses at the back door, and the females were standing round watching them; whilst the little boys in true character were riding on sticks, and driving imaginary refractory cattle, which required great exertions of voice to manage. The noble kangaroo dogs eagerly watched the proceedings; and the splendid sky, purely blue, and dotted by castellated clouds, promised a fine day for their sport.

Mr. Batally was in his glory; astonishing the females by his gallantry, and relating such hair-breadth escapes, and tremendous adventures in foreign parts, as put into the shade everything they had previously heard, or read; although the style of books they commonly perused were the Radcliffian order of romances; and received as authentic documents, while such parts as passed their comprehension were pronounced “deep reading.”

“I am a mind to go with you,” said Jane.

“You should have thought of that sooner, you are too late now my girl,” resumed Staples.

“Why?” demanded she, with some spirit.

“The horses are all in the bush.”

“Well, I can run them in on Mr. Batally's horse, it's standing in the stable. I'll be after you directly, Lewis.”

“Very good, but how will you find us?”

“My word! Can't I, cooey,” and in exemplification of her prowess she uttered one of those shrill, prolonged cries, commonly adopted from the aborigines; in the clear morning air her voice rung round the hills, echoing back in a wild manner. A general laugh terminated the refrain.

Jane was five feet nine inches in height, and a fine looking, cheerful girl; and her eccentricities were received very charitably, by all who knew her; indeed, her sisters being deficient in energy, and apt in their endeavours to be genteel, to assume a reserved manner, and sit silent before strangers, she was rather admired, particularly among her male friends.

Notwithstanding the practice Mr. Batally had had, in the prairies of North America, and pampas of South America, his companion did fall into the idea that he had some difficulty in keeping his seat, as they dashed through the heavy stringy bark forest, and belts of scrub, in pursuit of two young kangaroos, or ‘flyers,’ as Mr. Lewis called them. Not satisfied, however,

with the death of one of these, the huntsmen next encountered, and chased a large one; which finally, when hotly pursued, plunged into the creek; and stood up to its middle at bay; ready to seize and clasp in its forearms, while using its long hind ones *a la* bowie-knife, any dog which approached. After shooting the poor creature, such parts as were considered fit for the table were slung across the saddle, and they turned their horses' heads homewards: just then, a distant cooey reached them, and, presently, in answer to their calls Jane appeared, having been detained by a little hunting on her own account: she had followed a female kangaroo till she had cast her young one from her pouch; and disencumbered of its weight, readily escaped, and the melancholy bleating of the little creature, as twisted up in a handkerchief it hung from the horn of the saddle, attested its presence.

“What will do you with it,” inquired Mr. Batally, as he rode by her side.

“I shall rear it as a pet. I have two now, you must see them.”

“You will not go home to-night,” said Lewis.

“Thank you. I shall hope for another evening in the pleasant company of the ladies.”

The day's exertions had been sufficiently arduous, to make rest very acceptable; and feeling that he could shine among the “rustics,” as Mr. Batally mentally called them, he was by no means impartial to their society, and appeared to some advantage among them: he romped with the little boys, smoked with the young men, and complimented the girls: and if his Latin was not very erudite, it was at least equal to the schoolmaster's, with whom he argued many profound questions; and he returned home, bearing a joint of kangaroo meat, and the good opinions of all parties, although Lewis perceived that he was not the best of horsemen, at least, in the colonial sense: but then his style was acquired from the celebrated Don Jose, in South America; and might well be different, yet perfect of its kind.

The dissimilarity of the inhabitants of Murrumbowrie, and Wattletree Flat was conspicuous. Tudor was quite unreadable to Mr. Batally: nor could he fathom Gertrude's character, for he wanted the clue—that strong, religious principle which guided her every action—the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom—and the faith in Him, which in every perplexity, can say, “Even so, Lord, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.” Perhaps he understood his Aunt the best.

Neither did Mr. Tudor enter into his propensities, to draw pleasure from the pain of others, even though that other were but an opossum or kangaroo.

“I say, with Mr. William Howitt,” said he, when questioned on the subject, “let them enjoy God's good gift of light and sunshine, and if they must be the victims of our rights, they should never be the objects of our

wantonness.”

“But if that is the case, Mr. Tudor—” began the other, hotly.

“Pardon me, a truce to arguments, I am inconvertible, and have no hopes of making a proselyte.”

Chapter XV.

“Humbled beneath His mighty hand,
Prostrate, His providence adore;
'Tis done! Arise! He bids thee stand,
To fall no more.”

MONTGOMERY.

Shortly afterwards, Mr. Batally returned to Sydney. Gertrude suspected, but was not quite certain, that Mrs. Doherty had lent him money. She had heard him say in a careless manner, “I can give you an I.O.U., but it is not much consequence, for a trifle of this sort.”

Mrs. Doherty replied curtly, “no, you need not mind.” But Gertrude withdrew from the threshold, supposing her presence was not desired, and heard no more.

Next morning he went, on one of his aunt's horses. Poor old ‘Don,’ Tudor's favorite, being easy to catch, he had used constantly, and ultimately lamed; Tudor said, past all recovery.

Mrs. Doherty drew her chair close to the fire, that evening, with a face expressive of relief, and pleasure; and asked Gertrude for a German hymn.

The fire looked unusually bright, the candles superb; the whole room wore a comfortable, and blissful air of repose, which both females appeared fully to enter into; till Gertrude found she had sunk into a reverie, with her eyes fixed on Mrs. Doherty's face, and was startled out of it, by her inquiring what she was thinking of. The burning blush mounted to her temples, and called forth a keen, sharp glance, which increased her confusion, made her knot her cotton, and produced an impatient ejaculation from Mrs. Doherty, followed by fits of musing, which did not seem pleasant; but the cheery home feeling ultimately conquered.

Outwardly, as the world looks on things, all went on as heretofore. Mrs. Doherty was as active and brisk in manner, and speech; Tudor as indefatigable, perhaps a shade less severe, and more grave; and at times, even a sad expression might have sat on his fine features.

Gertrude also was much the same, much, but not quite; the spirit was growing stronger, was preparing for life, with an increasing sense of the responsibilities of life: to be, to think, to act here alone. Oh! how alone in moral responsibility, and yet one of millions; making up a part of those millions: acting on others, and being acted upon by example, by affection, and sympathy. Never for a single moment, apart from the presence of the

Almighty! Always, waking or sleeping, he is there! With a life that must be made up of hours and days: of work, not manual, of mental work only, but of moral work.

Ignorance, and superstition go hand in hand: sin, and misery, a dark fraternity, walk through the length, and breadth of this world of ours, and every being is living for good, or for evil; helping on the cause of righteousness, or swelling the foul tide of sin.

To no one could Gertrude speak of these things. As spring advanced, she saw less of Tudor, the only one who could understand, or counsel her: he was very kind, soft, and tender in his manner, and she knew that he watched from a distance over her: but she felt, rather than saw, that he avoided other than business calls at the house, though when there, was as composed as ever.

“Tudor never comes to spend the evening with us, now,” exclaimed Mrs. Doherty, upon one occasion. “How provoking it is! The house is lost without him.”

Gertrude felt grieved. Instinctively she feared that her presence had deprived her employer of that pleasure. Yet she never suspected why it had been so.

“He knows” pursued Mrs. Doherty, “how welcome he is, and how much I like it. What can be the reason, Gertrude?”

“I don't know, Ma'am.”

“And don't care, I suppose.”

Gertrude was conscious of any thing but indifference.

“I shall speak to him very seriously, and—whose voice is that, I hear in the yard? Bless me! was it not Charley Inkersole's?”

Happily she had not waited for an answer, but went to see; and Gertrude flew to her room, with a thousand emotions, that took so long to analyse, that Charley, who had found a strange servant, who did not enter into the thing, like Mary of old, and had turned from the kitchen, to encounter Mrs. Doherty, felt a strong propensity to mount his horse, and decamp.

“Good day,” said she, sharply. “I did not know you had returned.”

“I only came home this morning,” replied he, with a careless manner.

“We are honored by so early a call, upon my word.”

The bitter satirical tone, called up a rather warm color; but he said as calmly as before, “You have been well, I hope, Ma'am.”

“There has been time to get well, and to forget illness, since you left.”

The young man turned a wistful glance towards the door, and then said, “Is Mr. Tudor in?”

“He is at Dugdale's.”

“When he returns, will you tell him that we dropped some of our mob,

coming through the scrub, and will come and get them, in a day or two.”

“You brought down cattle, then.”

“Yes, one hundred.”

“Ha!” The meaning Mrs. Doherty threw into this interjection, shortened his visit. A brief ‘good day,’ on either side, was all that was exchanged; and he rode away.

Gertrude was working in the parlour, and looked up very calmly, as Mrs. Doherty entered, saying:

“It was Charles Inkersole; he came down this morning.”

“Indeed.”

“He has grown very manly; and looks as if he had had nothing to disturb his peace. He never mentioned you.”

Gertrude reddened.

Mrs. Doherty opened a book savagely, and began to turn the leaves, in a short, snapping manner.

No woman can feel otherwise than mortified at being forgotten; and Gertrude feeling, for she did not look up, that the keen eyes were flashing upon her, and trying to penetrate to her very heart, changed color painfully; yet preserved a composed demeanour.

To rise, and leave the room, was to acknowledge agitation; and therefore she remained.

Presently Kitty's voice was heard calling Gertrude, and she gladly laid down her work to go into the verandah.

Mrs. Doherty joined them, having a message for Mrs. Kenlow.

“I am going to see father count the sheep in. Will you come?” said the girl, addressing Gertrude.

“Not to-night.”

“Do.” There was something beyond counting the sheep, promised in the look.

“Not to-night, I am busy.”

Kitty looked at the quiet face in bewilderment; and with increasing meaning in her countenance, continued “and mother says you never come to see her now. Run down with me, it will do you good.”

“Thank you, not now: some day soon, I will.”

“But mother took up such a fine damper, when I came away, and you like damper.”

Gertrude laughed, and declared herself not hungry enough to be tempted; and with a smiling “good night,” escaped Kitty's assiduities; whilst she, with hasty steps, proceeded home, not at all surprised, evidently, to meet Charley Inkersole by the way.

“Where is she?” was his greeting.

“Taking her tea, I suppose,” replied Kitty, rather shortly.

“Didn't you see her?”

“Yes.”

“Wouldn't she come?”

“Mrs. Doherty was there, and I couldn't make her understand, or she wouldn't, or something.”

Kitty was a little irritated by her want of success; and the young man walked by her side, with very knit, and gloomy brows: quite forgetting that he had suffered many a weary month of unbroken silence to pass; and ready to blame sundry and several people, as false, and insidious: nor did the sight of Tudor tend to mollify his humour; and the salutation was equally cold, and haughty on both sides: whilst Tudor requested to be let know when the stray cattle were to be searched for.

One week of quiet passed, and then came a letter from Mr. Batally, to say that he was about to visit the farm again.

“I am sorry for it, particularly as Tudor goes to the station, soon,” remarked Mrs. Doherty.

“Does he? when?”

“In a few days. I do not like his going, Gertrude. I wish he would not go. Will you ask him to stay?”

“I! He will think me impertinent to interfere.”

“True; he must go, too.” She sighed, as the sudden impulse died away.

“I cannot bear to think of his going, this time: I hope nothing will happen,” continued Mrs. Doherty.

“Perhaps it is because Mr. Batally is coming—” Gertrude hesitated, and reddened; for she had herself experienced a decided chill at the thought of the promised visit.

“True.” A long, long fit of musing followed.

A day or two more, and Tudor was to start; but the last evening, he came to spend in the house. It was an evening to be remembered, and dreamt of, in many a long, dark day in life; a scene that would rise up before the eye, years afterwards. Never had he so thoroughly exerted himself to give pleasure—never had he been so free from austerity.

Mrs. Doherty sat with her eyes sparkling, eagerly watching each change in his expressive countenance, and catching the wise, or lively words he uttered. While Gertrude forgot her reserve, and laughed with a clear, silvery laugh of pleasure. Who has not spent some such evenings? What heart, but has its treasure picture, carefully guarded? The reality so precious, and fleeting, and yet engraved for life upon the heart.

But the morrow came, cheerless, and silent; yet the sun shone brightly, and the birds chirped, and chattered. Tudor was miles away: he had started

before daybreak; and the farm felt that master-mind withdrawn, and collapsed accordingly.

Mr. Batally's arrival rather deepened the gloom; and renewed in Gertrude's mind, the painful feelings connected with the disclosure he had made.

"Gertrude, are you sleepy?" asked Mrs. Doherty, a few nights afterwards, looking into her room.

"No, Ma'am," she replied, closing the book she was reading.

"Then come and sit with me, I feel rather downhearted."

When they had taken chairs before the vacant grate, for the weather was too warm to admit of a fire, Mrs. Doherty fell into a fit of musing; and Gertrude found full occupation in watching her changing countenance. She was very pale, and evidently agitated, and sad.

The silence grew oppressive; the candles grew dim, and needed snuffing: still she sat, thinking sadly, even wretchedly.

Gertrude had left the parlour early, that evening, and now asked herself in alarm, what had occurred? Had Mr. Batally taunted his aunt with the stain on her character? Had bad news reached her, from Tudor? Still she sat there, with her sallow, thin features pale, and pinched; and her black eyes full of unwonted light.

Gertrude could bear it no longer, and inquired, "What had happened?"

At the sound of her voice, Mrs. Doherty started. "Happened, Child?" she asked.

"I beg your pardon, Ma'am: you look so pale, I feared you might have had bad news from Mr. Tudor."

"No, no—Gertrude!"

"Yes Ma'am."

Mrs. Doherty rose, and paced the room, then returned. "Child!" she said, "you have wound yourself round my heart: you are like a daughter to me—I never knew what it was to have a child of my own—I never heard any creature call me mother, and hang upon me for protection, and love; but I know what love a mother feels—I know it by my feelings for you."

Gertrude looked up lovingly, but knew not how to reply.

The other, without waiting for it, pursued. "Till to-night, there was something I supposed buried between us. There was a dark spot, and unknown to you: *he* has undeceived me: he taunted me with it: he tried to drive me to give him money, to buy his silence. He told me that he could, that he had torn me from a place in your love: that he had sunk me in your eyes, to my proper level: that you would despise me, as he did."

"Dear Mrs. Doherty, don't, don't," sobbed Gertrude, throwing her arms round the slight form, that vibrated, and trembled with agitation, and

passion.

“My child, my child!” she said, convulsively pressing the young girl to her, and the tide of passion giving way, bursting into hysterical sobs and tears; tears that rushed in torrents over the cheeks, and left her exhausted, and faint in Gertrude's arms. Then gently she laid her in an easy chair, and brought scents to bathe the cold, clammy brow, and a glass of wine to drink, and slowly strength returned.

“You must know all,” she whispered.

“No, no, I don't wish. Tell me nothing: nothing to pain you,” and she hung over her with confiding, loving eyes.

“Yes, it is right—presently,” a long sigh closed the sentence; and then silence followed, only broken by those deep aspirations that succeed Hysteria, and which mark the relaxation of the nervous excitement.

By and bye, Mrs. Doherty began “Gertrude, I am, you know, an English woman. My mother died when I was young; but I was well brought up, well fed, and clothed, and taught in plain things; but they forgot I had a soul, and a heart: and they were left to run wild. I grew up self-willed, and violent, I owned no duty to God, or man; petted, and threatened by my father, and the old woman, who was at once his servant, and housekeeper, I reached womanhood; unprepared for life, unfit for duty.”

She seemed to dwell on these painful recollections, as if they were an old wound, the extent of which, she had resolved to probe, to seek a remedy.

“At eighteen, I met with, and loved a young man, named Hiram Carr; Gertrude, that was my error; not to love, that is natural, nay it is right; but to love without reason—in opposition to all that conscience whispered, or friends said. They expected me to obey; to yield up the dearest, strongest wishes of a woman's heart, who had no sense of duty to bid her do it—I had been trained to disobedience, as hundreds of children are—I had been forbidden to do, and I did it; was threatened, but the punishment never came—I knew it was empty breath. These things Gertrude, make children disobedient, and liars. Mind what I tell you, the time may come, when an infant mind may be placed in your hand to mould. Oh! mould it well—Oh, Heaven! to think of an immortal being, for whom no one cares beyond a certain routine of schooling, and dressing, and feeding, and who people love, and yet treat with the bitter curse of moral neglect.”

Again she paced restlessly, up and down the room; and Gertrude was awestruck, and silent.

“I left home, and friends for him, and with him, his wife, but the cursed of my father; and then followed neglect, jealousy, and sorrow; the curse came too surely. I will not tell you, Gertrude, of all that I suffered—I could not tell you—I knew I was cursed in my husband—I found that he was

lawless, and dishonest: that when the voice of conscience pleaded with me, and restrained me from participating with him, he scoffed, and hated me. Then came the time when the hand of justice stretched out to avenge the broken laws: and I fell a victim to its vengeance. Was not the home in which I dwelt, furnished, and supported by the fruits of embezzlement, and midnight robbery? And together we became exiles!—He died on the sea, far from friends, and home; but I lived, as the young do live, through sorrow.”

“Through the matron's recommendation, I was assigned to a respectable, and wealthy family, where I spent my time of bondage, and then married Dr. Doherty. I loved him, Gertrude, I had reason to do so; and never did he allow the past to shadow the present. And now Child, can you love me as before? Can you respect me as before?—as Tudor does?”

Gertrude sprung to the open arms, and wept. For a long time they stood so; the elder woman entwining the younger with her arms, and trying to shut her out from the temptations, and sins of her own life, yearning over her, as the mother yearns over her child. Even now, she could but dimly understand the ‘Everlasting Arms,’ that were spread around that fair young girl—she could but faintly see “Him who carries the Lamb in His bosom.” She did not (for the lesson had been but faintly taught by sorrow) know the power of holiness, the safety of the armour of religion. That the gentle, and meek may tread life's thorny path in safety—that the cheerful, and artless may not heed the siren voice of gilded, and painted temptation; that the slight arm may slay the giant. “Trust in the Lord for ever, for the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” This is the strong tower into which the righteous flee, and are safe. And as her low, yearning cry of “My child, my child” at times broke the silence, faintly there stole up through chaos, and disorder, the entreaty, “Into thine hand, Oh Lord!”

Like the ray of light which just penetrates the pall of night, thrown over the dead yesterday, there arose upon her, the light of faith; and when again she commenced her narrative, it was in a softer tone.

“Many” she said, “had been injured, almost ruined by him—I knew it, and when I found myself wealthy, then the power came to fulfil the determination of repaying them, with interest. By the assistance of Tudor, I have transmitted large sums for this purpose, and now the last is paid, I am free from debt, a debt which could not be claimed, and which I no less felt just. I am not rich, Gertrude: not moneyed, on this account: but perhaps I shall be so in time—but I have enough, more than enough, already.”

“Now you must go to bed; it is midnight. There go, God bless you!” she pressed a kiss on the pale cheek: but Gertrude still lingered.

“You will not sit thinking?”

“No, no, I promise you. And you, child, must sleep, you are as pale as a ghost.”

Chapter XVI.

“O shame of reason, caught by veriest show!
Love is but simple selfishness;
Careless alike of alien weal and woe;
Intent itself to bless.

* * * * *

Therefore I am resolved, with stedfast mind,
To cut this gangrene from my heart;
And though its tangled knots, through all have twined,
To spare no quivering part.”

ECILA.

That a night of thought, rather than sleep, followed the conversation recorded in the last chapter, was what each tried to hide from the other. There were too many sad lessons in the tale, not to occupy Gertrude's mind; and make her offer up a prayer of thanksgiving, that she had been rescued from a like fate: “how similar it might have been,” she said, shuddering.

A weary day succeeding agitation, and sleeplessness, had tintured every object with a dull hue. Mrs Doherty, as she always did when sad, wished Tudor was at home, and looked out along the path, to his deserted cottage.

Mr. Batally, who laboured under the delusion that his parting from Gertrude in displeasure, had been a source of the deepest sorrow to her, kindly extended a patronising familiarity; which was met with such a cold, almost proud reception, as threatened a depth beyond his philosophy: that women could be coy, pettish, or jealous, he could understand; but indifference, total, contemptuous indifference, was a state of affairs unknown to him; he was puzzled.

“What do you think of the Women's Rights movement, Miss Gertrude?” he inquired that evening, as they sat at tea.

“I have heard little about it, Sir.”

“But what do you think of women as doctors, and lawyers, and parsons?”

“I do not see why women should try to be like men,” said Mrs. Doherty, tartly.

“Miss Gertrude has not favoured us with her opinion,” he pursued, fixing his eyes upon her.

“I think women have much to reform, Sir, but not quite in the way they

are doing," she replied, timidly.

"How then?"

"They do not seem fit to battle with the world, as men do; but there is much yet to learn, and unlearn in their homes, and pursuits; the mind might be elevated, the heart guided, and the taste refined; the home have an influence of higher and sublimer things; and woman become a companion spirit for man—not contend with him. A Bloomer dress leaves as much as ever to do."

Mr. Batally was perplexed, but bowed with a gracious smile, in acknowledgment of some vague sense he had of a compliment, she was paying to mankind, and him as their representative, on the present occasion.

Dr. Bower just then joined them, and was greeted in so cordial manner, by the females, that he was evidently quite flattered.

"And so you have lost Tudor," he said, helping himself to a slice of meat from the 'salt round' on the table.

"Yes, we are so dull," returned Mrs. Doherty, "I am quite pleased to see you, doctor; you must gossip me into spirits, again."

"You have no want of good company either," said he, with one of his satirical, bitter smiles, and turning an eye upon Mr. Batally, who sat coldly staring.

Mrs. Doherty pushed the bread tray towards him in a manner that jarred the cruet stand, and made the glasses jingle: and Gertrude was just supplying the cup, Marianne had brought in for the doctor. Dr. Bower's little grey eyes sparkled with a satisfied, malicious expression; but he addressed his remarks to Mr. Batally, with a running under fire of satire, too abstruse for that gentleman's observation, but quite intelligible to Gertrude.

The conversation appeared to have a natural bias towards national prejudices, whenever the doctor, and Mr. Batally met; and the latter soon dashed into the thick of the argument, while Mrs. Doherty warmed at once, and joined them. The conversation was conducted in peculiar style; each perfectly unconvincible, and quite incapable of supporting their predilections by argument. Mrs. Doherty lost temper; Mr. Batally indulged in sweeping censures; and Dr. Bower in sarcasm.

"It's no use for a new comer, to form such hasty conclusions," said the lady, "you can't know anything about it."

"The scenes, and persons being new, strike me; use has blinded your eyes," retorted Mr. Batally.

Gertrude hoping to make a diversion, here inquired if Lakin was not gone to the Post; but unintentionally supplied fresh food for debate.

“Talking of new comers, there's Lakin as a specimen of sharpness,” said Mrs. Doherty.

“What of him?”

“What indeed!—He came out with a good outfit, and some eleven pounds of ready cash, went to a tavern to board, expecting something to ‘turn up,’ which means a fairy god-mother, or the philosopher's stone, I suppose; and being a goodnatured, soft creature, and disposed to drink, became socially inclined, and was soon surrounded by a lot of sharpers, and—”

“Done brown,” suggested Mr. Batally.

“Became intoxicated,” pursued his aunt, with some severity, “some one proposed his putting up his trunk, clothes, books, eleven sovereigns, and all, for sale; and poor Lakin who is always rather majestic in his ideas, when drinking, agreed to the proposal: the bystanders entered warmly into the joke, the box, and its contents were bid for, and when the poor creature awoke next morning, in his senses, with a head-ache, and heart-ache to boot, the landlord handed him one pound, which was the sum his possessions had fetched; and I hired him through a Registry Office, soon after.”

“He had but one suit of clothes, at that time, and was in great distress: but his pride forbade his riding upon a bullock dray, and he walked from Sydney here in glazed slippers.”

Mr. Batally's comments were not flattering to the sufferer; and the conversation falling back to the old theme, Gertrude, as soon as practicable, left the tea table.

There was yet some two hours before dark, and the weariness of the morning had, under the influence of uncongenial society, been seriously augmented. A run through the fresh air, and a talk with nature, promised relief; and throwing on her holland sun-bonnet, she started off to visit Mrs. Kenlow, and Kitty.

Under every burnt log, a fine tuft of violets, pink, blue, or white, had sprung up, scentless, and fragile, but pretty; all round the black, charred timber, the blue young leaves were forming wreaths, and the green blades of grass shot up, like a new sown field of wheat, sprinkled by butter-cups, and birds-eyes, and fungi of singular beauty.

Gertrude went on, filling her apron with treasures, and growing cheerful, and courageous at each step. The little flowers were preaching their own sermons, “with most persuasive reasons,” and the clear, bright, spring air bid defiance to weariness, and gloom.

Now dancing down some bank, or leisurely crossing a flat, pausing to watch a magpie feeding her brood, in the untidy nest of dry sticks, or

peeping into the nest of the clamorous soldier-birds, to see the pretty pink, and purple speckled eggs, she pursued her way, till the sheep overseer's hut was reached, and then, after half an hour's chat, she turned homewards.

But a short distance from the hut, Charley emerged from among the trees, leading his horse by the bridle, and came forward, with extended hand.

"I am so glad to see you," he said, but though the little face, that looked up at him, was kind, it was grave; and his gay manner suddenly changed.

"I heard you were returned, you have been longer than you intended, I think."

"Yes, Miss Gertrude, I could not help it. Till Dick married, he and I went shares, for father made no will, he thought it would cause his death to do so; and just at the last, he was most time out of his mind; but when Betsey came home, she did not like my going halves, and was always pulling Dick over the coals; so I went to the Abercrombie: then one thing or 'nother kept me."

Gertrude extended her hand, and was wishing him good evening, with something about hurrying home before it was dark: he took her hand, but said:

"I am going to walk with you a bit of the way. Gertrude, you mustn't run away so."

They walked on, and he pursued. "We have come to a settlement now; Dick has behaved very handsome, and I am going to make a home of my own. I can't stand Betsey, her temper is so bad.

"I don't exactly know what I shall do; whether I shall take a farm, or a station. I've a mind to try a station, for I'm fond of an active life, and I think it would be pleasanter. I should put up a nice snug little place, and there would be nothing to do but look after the cattle, and take down a mob, once or twice a year, to Sydney. Don't you think it would be nice?"

"I am quite incompetent to judge: your brother could better advise you than I, Sir."

The same quiet, grave tone.

Charley's bright smile vanished, and he said bitterly—

"You are like the rest of the women, they're all—" he would have said faithless, but remembered that he had never bound her by any promise, or even implied one; therefore she had broken no faith with him.

To Charles Inkersole, whose acquaintance with the softer sex had been limited to the coarse or ignorant, the fragile, sweet young girl by his side, was the very personification of feminine beauty; while dimly there crept through his uncultured soul, a sense that she was holier, and purer than any he had ever seen before: to himself, even he could not define what he felt; his mind was not disciplined, and his inner nature trained, and active—

much that she valued, he would laugh at as nonsense—and yet there was a certain awe, which goodness ever unconsciously exercises, over even its enemies; and Charley was no intentional enemy of right; but he was a child of nature, such a one as springs up, and is now springing up, with some modifications of character, and circumstances, in hundreds of bush farms. Comely, tall, and vigorous, and often wonderfully moral, when the tainted stock from which they spring, be accounted: but quite ignorant of religion; out of the way of churches, and Sunday schools; taught to read, and write, and so on, by some ruined tradesman, or educated scamp, who settles down as “the schoolmaster,” in those isolated farmhouses; educates the boys, and girls, and perhaps drops (how can it be otherwise?) some deadly poison into the young mind.

Such had been the training of Charles Inkersole, and his brother: but beneath those bright, smiling eyes, was a waste, and the warm young heart, with its strong pulse, beat as free from restraint of right, and holiness, as when its wondrous machinery first stirred in the baby bosom.

But an unwonted pang shot through his heart then, and restraint gave way before a determination to know all, even the worst.

It was not till that moment, that Gertrude was aware how completely her love had departed. She received his offer unmoved; she could feel no emotion, at least none of love; it was vain, that he spoke, or looked burning words of affection, they fell like ice, upon the heart, and awoke no glow. She could not feel with him, and she wept bitterly, and long, she hardly knew why, her requiem over what had been, over the death of her girlish love, her first awakening to that magic touch.

She recalled the days, when she had longed and wearied for that word of love, now proffered her; when she had crept away to weep over a first disappointment, and first experience of life's bitter realities. The time was gone for ever, she had never known it till then, so imperceptibly had the waters of oblivion fallen upon her soul; she did not tell him, for that bitter experience, and those nights of weeping, had made her a woman, that she had once loved him, she simply said, “It was impossible, quite impossible; she never could be his wife.” And she felt as she spoke, that her dead love had no resurrection; for respect as a foundation, was wanting, and her own love of right had passed sentence upon it.

So they parted; and Gertrude felt that a Guardian Hand had been stretched over her, and saved her.

Dr. Bower was relating recollections of the Black Jack fever, when she entered, and illustrating it with the ‘swabbing,’ and ‘sky-larking,’ and ‘bullock dray,’ with a glance at Mr. Batally.

Dr. Bower's face always wore an almost idiotic expression of vacancy,

when he was relating these interesting particulars, and his eyes used to fix themselves upon some object, evidently hundreds of miles away, till he came to the 'bullock team,' when he suddenly turned them upon some one present, and then went off again, to India perhaps.

Gertrude knew all his anecdotes by heart, and was prepared to prompt, if necessary; and Mrs. Doherty, although constitutionally too irritable to hear repetitions, always manifested a praiseworthy interest in the 'Black Jack,' and other little favorites of ghastly memory.

Mr. Batally lighted a cigar, and puffed shortly, and presently led off the conversation to the merits, and demerits of the Australians, a subject on which Mrs. Doherty, and Dr. Bower warmed immediately, in fact, they were rather touchy upon it, and bore the visitor's sweeping censures rather badly.

"This is well known," remarked his aunt, "that the natives are a race, sensible, good mannered, and industrious, and that can't be said of all Englishmen," and her fierce eyes were sufficiently full of meaning.

"Yes, the capacity of the Australian youth is proverbial," said Dr. Bower. "I consider their development decidedly favourable to—"

Mr. Batally laughed, and begged Gertrude to take up the cudgels for him, or he would be demolished between his aunt, and her friend.

"I shall leave you to fight your own battles," she said, with a quiet smile. "I have a very high opinion of the natives."

"Of all, or individuals?" inquired the gentleman, with an unpleasant, meaning look.

"I believe, to have a good opinion of all, one must necessarily have the same of individuals," she replied, calmly.

Mr. Batally played with his moustaches, but searched her guileless countenance, keenly.

"Very well answered, Gertrude," said Mrs. Doherty.

"Can you defend the manners, and customs of these immaculate natives?" asked Mr. Batally, with his eyes, still fixed on Gertrude.

"In defence of my own; I must go and see after various little concerns," she said smiling and rising, and when she returned, with a tray of glasses, and decanters of hot water, etc., the company had evidently pursued the subject past the point of mutual forbearance.

National prejudices are so little regarded, and so often insulted by the new comer, while he is of course so ignorant, and helpless in colonial ways, that there is some rankling feeling, pretty generally found between the two; which time the great planer, smooths down better than arguments.

Gertrude's timely interruption smoothed the ruffled humours of her companions, and Mr. Batally was, or thought he was excessively gracious,

and bestowed some most enchanting smiles upon the corner where Gertrude sat, making up old clothes for a sick child at the huts, but unless she possessed the gift of clairvoyance, or spider's eyes, they must have been lost, for she stitched away most perseveringly.

Chapter XVII.

“Thy bright, brief day knew no decline,
’Twas cloudless joy;
Sunrise, and night alone were thine,
Beloved boy!
This morn beheld thee blithe, and gay;
That found thee prostrate in decay;
And ere a third shone, clay was clay;
Casa Wappy!”

D. MOIR.

Staples was a man of English birth, who had come out with his mother from his native land, following the fortunes of a worthless husband, and father. Very rarely indeed [did he mention], of late years he had ceased ever to mention, that time, or those parents; but there had been years of hard struggling, and if the boy had collected little scholastic lore, he had an abundant store of craft, and a keen love of money.

From “little Jack,” he would rise to be “John Staples, Esquire,” was an early determination; for this he toiled, thought, and planned, and he had succeeded. When he married Miss Shettle, and became guardian of her orphan sisters, and proprietor of Wattletree Flats, he began to have correspondents, and to take a newspaper; and then came the much coveted “Esquire.” The first time the desired epithet was placed after his name, he carried the letter everywhere he went, and literally wore it out. Into every conversation, he introduced, “A gentleman wrote me from Sydney, t’other day,” and the letter was drawn out, ostensibly to read some passage about the weather: however he grew tired of this; and the general adoption of the title, rendered his displaying it no longer necessary to his pride.

He was a man who, once seen, could never be forgotten, his thin nose, hooked above his mouth, with a cautious, hawk-like expression; and his eyes, keen, clear, and anxious, suggested the presence of a cat, professedly sleeping, but with a sharp eye upon the partly open door of a cupboard, where mice are known to commit depredations.

As Staples's wealth increased, the love of enlarging his possessions increased in equal ratio, and for some time past, he had coveted the station of Jimbindoon, which lay between his property, and Murrumbowrie. He had sounded Tudor on the subject several times, and received an intimation of an equal desire on his part to retain it; which had for a while induced his

cat-like nature to adopt a sleeping, forgetful posture: however, he watched his prey, and being aware that Mrs. Doherty had no children, or near kin, to leave her estates to, continued to hope.

As therefore, he rode on his way to Murrumbowrie, over the well grassed, and watered flats, and the fine timbered ranges, he resolved once more to try his success; and therefore appeared in the back yard, instead of at the superintendent's cottage.

Gertrude was in the kitchen, engaged in some household mystery, among jars and pie dishes, and attracted by the horse's tread, came to the door.

Staples alighted, and advanced; he was puzzled, for even in a long holland apron, and with hands covered with paste, the young emigrant did not bear a servanty appearance; her soft, light hair hung in curls round her neck, and as a ray of light streamed over the roof, and fell bright and golden upon her, she looked so fair, glowing, and delicate, that the involuntary exclamation was—

“Beg pardon, Miss; is the Missus in?”

“She is, do you wish to see her?”

He assented, and Gertrude led the way into the sitting room.

Mrs. Doherty was there, and recognised her visitor, and the young girl withdrew. The subject was a little awkward to commence upon, and Staples approached it by circles of conversation: the weather, of course, received due notice.

“Looks like a change, Mrs. Doherty,” said Staples, glancing out of window.

“Do you think so. How is the wind?”

“Well, it's full in the rainy quarter. It was very wet t'other day—rained very hard.”

“What, Thursday?” briskly.

“Yes, Thursday; but it took up nicely, again.”

“Yes,” rather impatiently.

“Pretty fair for the crops, Mrs. Doherty, if this weather lasts.”

“Yes,” in an irritated tone. These commonplace conversations always ruffled her: so she abruptly inquired—“Did you see the flocks, as you came over?”

“No, though the shepherds ought to feed them on the ranges more than they do: it's lazy work, you see Mrs. Doherty, on the flats, they don't want so much attention, with a dog, they are no trouble, a'most: but it injures the sheep, being always on one place; herbage gets cropt so low you see—then the flats are damp, I'd be afeard of the rot. But of course Mr. Tudor looks after them well.”

The tone in which the concluding sentence was uttered, would have

conveyed to a stranger's mind, a most unfavourable opinion of the person in question.

"Yes, well," reiterated Mrs. Doherty, with emphatic satisfaction.

"Oh! no doubt. I don't make a particle of a doubt," in a deprecatory tone. Being fairly on the subject of the coveted possession, the visitor, using all due caution, revealed his wishes.

"What! you want Jimbindoon?" exclaimed Mrs. Doherty.

Staples admitted the fact.

"No, Sir," returned she warmly, "I am not disposed to part with it, I could not spare it, it's my home station. What would become of the sheep?"

"I would purchase them also, if we came to terms; indeed Mrs. Doherty, it might be to your advantage to strike a bargain." He backed up the remark by drawing from his pocket, a roll of very dingy notes, redolent of tobacco smoke.

"I am not in want of money, Mr. Staples, and I won't part with the land."

The man rose.

"You may have to, some day," he returned, whether in a general moralising manner, or with particular meaning, did not appear. Mrs. Doherty took the latter view, and retorted warmly that, "her affairs were in a very flourishing state."

Staples withdrew with a pleasant 'good-day,' and hope that he had given no offence: but with a malicious twinkle in his eyes.

Mrs. Doherty presently went out into the kitchen, to communicate the cause of her displeasure to Gertrude. At the kitchen door she paused. Gertrude stood by a woman who was seated on a chair, her head on the young girl's shoulder, and one of her hands clasped between hers.

The woman was not weeping, and the tears that sparkled on her hand, had fallen from Gertrude's eyes. She was speaking in a low, quiet voice, with a short, gasping breath between each word.

"He was playing there, the poor lamb, and there was a whirlwind—you have seen the whirlwinds—and it tore off a bough from the big tree alongside of the hut, and it fell on him."

"And is he much hurt?" inquired Gertrude, in a smothered voice: but the woman spoke calmly, with the calmness of a great grief.

"Yes, he is dying. I ran up for the Missus, and you."

"I will come. Can you walk now, do you think?"

"Yes." She rose, tottering. Mrs. Doherty advanced.

"She's fainted," said the servant, in reply to her mistress's look of interrogation.

"You will go."

"By all means, Gertrude. My bonnet—let me see, I am not sure where it

is, child.”

“Never mind, I'll look.”

“Take the keys, and bring a bottle of wine; and child, there is an old table cloth, I think.”

“Yes Ma'am, shall I get it?”

“Do, linen rags are always useful.”

Mrs. Doherty's sun-bonnet never could be found, when it was wanted: sometimes it was left out in the barn, and sometimes thrown behind some chest of drawers; in fact, it never was where she considered she kept it, on the pegs, in the hall. Gertrude knew the case was hopeless, by past experience, of finding it in less than half an hour, and substituted a neat glazed holland of her own; and with a basket of hastily collected useful things, and cordials, she rejoined them.

“Will you take my arm, Mrs. Jackson?”

“No, Miss Gertrude, I can walk.” And she sped on before them, urged on by her child's danger, till the agonised spirit over-mastered the feeble body. The woman ran swiftly, and heedlessly over ploughed fields; and leaping across the narrow drain, connecting two large water-holes, and through the rough ground, covered with tussock grass, and clover, along the banks of the stream.

Her dwelling was the very farthest of the huts, which were built at intervals along the creek. Mrs. Doherty, though active, and light, was left far behind; and Gertrude, encumbered with her basket, panted by her side: but one object was before the mother, her dying babe; and distance, and obstacles were forgotten, and fatigue was unheeded: so when they came to the hut door, she was by the rough built up stand, on which the child lay. It was pale, and its eyes closed, but the downy cheek still looked plump, and baby-like, and the little arms thrown out on the patchwork quilt, were round, and full: there was a folded sheet thrown over the crushed little body, but the crimson tide had dyed the covering, and all that kind, and loving hands could do, availed not to stem it.

The doctor had been sent for, though all knew, before he could be found, life would have ebbed.

Now and then the lips trembled, and the child uttered in a faint tone, “Mammy, Mammy,” in its agony calling on her, whose bosom had ever been the pillow for its woes, in every childish trial.

“My boy, mammy's own darling!”—she tried to comfort it—she did not weep, for her grief was too great; when it was gone, when the faint breath was hushed for ever, she would weep, but not now.

“Where are we safe?” ejaculated a voice behind Gertrude. She turned quickly: there was one of the farm servant's wives, wiping the tears from

her pale cheek. Indeed, the room was full of sympathizers. The father of the child had been summoned from his work; and he sat by the fire, on an old sea chest, in a desponding attitude; and though Jackson was a rough, ignorant, and it often seemed, an unfeeling man in his strength, and vigour, and contempt for the feeble; yet heavy sobs shook his frame then.

The women of the party had gathered round the child's rough couch; there was the old grandmother from a neighbouring hut, and her daughter with a baby rocking in her arms, for the child whimpered, and its cries disturbed the dying little sufferer.

The woman, whose words had startled Gertrude, crossed the room, and layed her hand on the shoulder of the man. "Look up brother," she said, "it's the Lord's hand you know, you must not take on so."

He shook off her hand, and replied angrily, "if it was your child, woman."

"Good Lord take care of 'em! Where are we safe, indeed!" She looked round, as if afraid that the very slabs, and beams of the hut might prove traitorous.

"The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed: a refuge in time of trouble." The words passed through Gertrude's mind; she longed to tell him of the sure refuge.

"We must all get a bit of a crush, some day or other," remarked the old woman, with more philosophy, than appeared to consort with the excited feelings of the party.

"True mother," returned the former speaker, who had a fraternising mode of address, "but that don't seem to comfort one always. It was such a beauty."

The little trembling lips murmured again, "Mammy," in such an entreating, longing tone, that it broke down every barrier of restraint, and for a few moments, a wail of grief rose from every lip but the mother's; she moistened its mouth with wine, and water, that Gertrude presented in a pannikin; her eyes never moved from its face.

The noise had aroused the babe, and it whispered, "Mammy, mammy—I can't leave you, mammy—I die, mammy."

The mother fainted; and when she recovered, the babe had joined the little ones, of whom our Lord said "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not"; and with her head laid beside her child, and its golden hair brushing her cheek, the woman knelt, and wept, and prayed, and the agony of her heart found relief.

"Sister, sister," pleaded the other woman.

"Let her shed tears: it does her good," interrupted Mrs. Doherty, removing a handkerchief from her eyes, which red, and swollen, bore

witness to her sympathy.

“You're right, sister,” she returned, and sat down on the couch, and wept with her.

Mrs. Doherty left the hut: Gertrude lingered: she knelt down beside the mother; and throwing one arm lovingly round her, whispered “Hope thou in God, for you shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance,”—“Dear Mrs. Jackson he will help you—try Him?”

“Oh! Miss Gertrude, I wish I was like you,”

“No, no, not like me:—but like Him. Do remember how he says; ‘call on me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you.’ ”

“Ah that's some trouble: but it's dead! my boy—my little lamb.”

For awhile they mingled their tears in silence, and then she said again, “In every trouble. He is free from every pain and sin now; and you may go to him.”

In some of the higher regions of the country sudden, and tempestuous whirlwinds are far from uncommon: confined to particular localities, and sudden in their rise and termination, they rarely do more mischief than levelling our forest trees, or twisting off branches: carrying them up into the air, and casting them again to the ground: such had been the case, in the present instance: a whirlwind passed over the hut, and finding resisting objects in the branches of a high woolly-gum tree, wrenched off a considerable limb: which, being decayed through the centre, readily yielded to its force; and the jagged end had alighted upon the little creature as he sat in the shade of the tree, amusing himself with a few twigs, and flowers he had gathered, and humming, and talking to them in his baby way. The wounds were severe; and as no skilful assistance was at hand, had proved rapidly fatal.

Beautifully has it been said by the Poet, when speaking of the “child of our affection”

“Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air:
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grow more fair.
Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken,
The bond which nature gives;
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.”

Over that mother, ever hovered an infant form, beckoning upward; ever whispered to her aching heart, the promises of reunion, till like a guardian

angel, the baby hand pointed her to Christ, and bid her there seek hope, and rest. Thus the child lived for the mother, when others had in a great measure, forgotten it.

But to return from this prophetic stretching into the future, to the evening immediately following the child's death.

A deep gloom was cast over the farm; every heart sympathised with the parents in their bereavement.

Mr. Batally had declared it an awful thing, and turning to Gertrude, remarked in a moralising tone, that "In the midst of life, we are in death," as a sort of acknowledgment of her religious character, which people seem to find it necessary to make upon such occasions.

"Shall I beg you, Miss Gertrude, to be my almsbearer, and give the woman this half-sovereign."

"Thank you, Sir; but in her present trouble, I fear that would have little effect," she returned, quite shocked.

"Well, as you like. Money is always useful."

"True: but there are griefs where it is powerless to palliate."

The gentleman assumed an air of polite incredulity, and turning to Mrs. Doherty, said in a careless tone, "by the bye, was not Mr. Staples here this morning?"

"Yes."

"I should like to have seen him. I think I shall ride over there, one of these fine days. Rather originals, eh Mrs. Doherty?"

"I don't see much originality about them."

"They struck me as being 'colonial,' at least."

"Yes, there are a great many persons of that class in the colony."

"Pretty well off, I dare say."

"Very. Staples showed me a large roll of notes, this morning," returned Mrs. Doherty warmly, thinking of the subject of their conversation, and what had called forth the ostentatious display.

"Did the old people cut up well?"

"The girls have handsome portions, if that is what you want to know," retorted she, abruptly leaving the room.

Mr. Batally whistled, and then looking at Gertrude, burst out into a laugh, rather suddenly checked, as she did not join; "what a perfect crab-apple our worthy aunt is," he substituted, instead.

"Mrs. Doherty is always kind to me, Sir; very kind, and good," she replied, gravely.

"Well, well; I meant no offence. I suspect I do not occupy a place in her good books. What became of the cigars I left on the table, before breakfast?"

“I put them in the box on the mantle-piece.”

Lightly as Mr. Batally had thrown back Mrs. Doherty's insinuation, he was seriously weighing the gold, and the counterbalancing inconveniences, and objections to an ignorant and low born wife, but very wisely determined to await Mr. Tudor's return, as he hoped to gain some definite information, upon monetary affairs from him; which Mrs. Doherty's irritability precluded.

While the dew drops yet glistened upon the grass, and the Kingfisher poured forth his mellow notes in a matin hymn, Mrs. Doherty and Gertrude walked down to Jackson's hut: he was out, but his wife sat by the rough couch, busily altering an old black dress, her mistress had given her, and the tanned, quaint straw bonnet, lay on the table, its faded bows of green riband replaced by some crape of rusty complexion. She was pale and weary looking; with the heavy eye-lid of long weeping.

“Can I help you?” inquired Gertrude, when the first kind greeting was over.

“No, Miss, thank you—I've a'most done, the Missus's gown nearly fits me.”

“Where is Jackson?”

Her voice trembled as she returned. “He went up to the carpenter's bench. Mr. Tudor always has some boards there, and my Master says he's sure he'd spare him a bit for—”

“Yes, yes, he shall have all he needs.”

The mother turned away, and was very quiet for a few moments; and then uncovered the little corpse.

Poor Soul! she had sat up all night plaiting, and stitching the little frilled dress; the last she would make for her baby.

“I have a great favor to ask, Missus,” she said presently, when the coverlet was replaced. “May I bury my boy alongside the old Master? lonesome, but in the bush.”

“You may, and let Jackson put up some railings round.” Mrs. Doherty pressed her hand, and passed out.

“Miss Gertrude, will you set a white rose bush by it?”

“I will; if I can help you, let me know.”

“Thank you Miss, you're always kind to us; and you were fond of him,” and the woman wept: but softened tears, which do the heart good, for the spring was opened by the soft touch of kindness, which embalms the most trivial action flowing from the heart—

Chapter XVIII.

* * *Death is in that chamber!
Startle not with echoing sound, the strangely solemn peace.
Death is here in spirit, watcher of a marble corpse,—That
eye is fixed—that heart is still—how dreadful in its stillness.

M. F. TUPPER.

That “we know not what a day may bring forth,” is an axiom which daily finds confirmation; and that that Thursday, that Thursday from which, for the future, all events could be dated, and all periods defined, was no exception, was often in after years, a subject of wonder.

Bright as ever, the sun rose in the clear, cloudless sky; loudly as ever, the blue crane screamed to his mate, in the reeds by the the creek; sweetly the kingfisher sang, and lightly the magpie chatted; and man, ever busy, and toilsome man, went forward on his path of labour, till the evening.

Mr. Batally slung on his shot belt, and took his fowling piece, for a day's sport, and Gertrude, and her handmaid submitted the snow-white linen from the bleaching ground to the smoothing effects of the mangle. Every thing was as usual.

Afterwards, for the time came when all these things were noted down, and remembered, and the brain racked for minutiae; afterwards, a dread feeling of how perfectly as usual every circumstance had been, visited them. No warning preceded, no signal of distress, but the solemn words, “for in such an hour as ye think not,” sounded in each affrighted ear.

* * * * *

“Did Mrs. Doherty call?” said Gertrude, pausing to smooth out a fold in a table cloth.

“Not as I heard, Miss; I think it's the wind in the crack there, I did hear something before,” and Marianne went to work with double zeal, till the two baskets were piled with nice folded linen; and then, with their load, they passed into the house.

“My gracious! what ails the Missus?” cried Marianne.

Mrs. Doherty lay extended on the floor; they lifted her up, laid her on the sofa, and bathed her pale face; she was strangely cold, and rigid, and one small blue bruise marked her brow.

The woman ran for Mrs. Kenlow, and Kitty, and then all that each could suggest, or do, was done; but the hands grew more rigid, and the thin

features yet thinner.

Lakin, and some one or two others, were sent on horseback to search the country for Dr. Bower; whither he had gone, no one could tell; properly speaking, he had no home; the place he called his residence, was fifteen miles distant, but he was always travelling from one patient's house to another's.

Doubt, and fear, and a strange mysterious awe, gained strength. Gertrude wept bitterly, then aroused to try some new thought of remedy, then, when it failed, covered her face with her hands, and wept again. All the women on the farm came in by degrees, and one sat down in Mrs. Doherty's chair, and another opened the cupboards to search for spirits, to bathe her head! another routed over her bedroom for blankets, and pillows; and every one seemed intent on acting as mistress, and wasting as much as possible in a given time.

Mr. Batally returned, and showed some real feeling, and even suggested to Gertrude the propriety of starting himself in search of the doctor; but remembered that he should not know where to look, so it was no use.

“But do you think she is dead?” he added.

Gertrude almost shrieked “Oh no, surely not!—What could it be?—she was quite well at breakfast time—Oh, Mr. Batally!” and she sobbed.

He took both her hands in his; but even then, she withdrew them from the familiar free pressure; and turned away, pained anew by the want of sympathy.

“Oh! if Tudor were here,” escaped her lips, unconsciously.

Mr. Batally frowned, and replied rather coldly, “Even he could not raise the dead.”

“THE DEAD!” awful words, and how? what had broken the pitcher at the fountain, and cut the thread of life?

Each felt that Death had been in their midst, and taken, as each said, the very last one they would have thought of, and that very confession urged with potent reasoning, “who shall go next?” not the most likely, not the sickly, and infirm, perhaps it may be the young, and strong, it may be **THYSELF**.

What a suffering night it was, watching for the return of the messengers, and the doctor, although hope was almost gone, reason had long forbidden it, but affection hoped against hope.

The busy little crowd had dispersed; only Mrs. Kenlow, and one other remained with Gertrude, beside the pale, rigid body, which lay among blankets and hot bricks, cold and chill; the whole party were painfully tired, and started, and trembled at each sound; there was a dog that had been tied up to prevent his following Lakin, that would whine, and shake

his chain, and every time he did so, the watchers all sprang up, and said in an undertone, "listen! hush!" and then Gertrude's forehead would sink down on the pillow again, and her occasional low, deep sob only broke the deep silence.

But when next day, Dr. Bower did come, he brought no relief, for not as they supposed had she had a fit, and bruised her forehead by the fall, but that bruise was the cause of death, and *that blow had been dealt by other hands than her own*, and now came the questions, Who? and Wherefore?

Dr. Bower was the Coroner, and he intimated his intention of holding an inquest, and endeavouring to elicit the apparently hidden motives, and cause of Mrs. Doherty's death; and Gertrude wrote a long letter to Tudor, as collected, and consolatory as she could, for she knew how deeply he would feel this blow; and then one of the men was sent on horseback, with directions to press on after the superintendent, who was then on his way to the Abercrombie, from whence he would visit all the stations in succession, before returning to the home shearing.

Dr. Bower had also despatched messengers for the nearest magistrate, and when he, and a few persons to assist in forming a Jury, arrived late that afternoon, a vigorous examination commenced. Nothing could be elicited. Gertrude, and Marianne had retired to the laundry shortly after breakfast, and not left it until they discovered Mrs. Doherty dead; both remembered the sound they had heard, and agreed that it was not like a call, or cry; might have been some one speaking loud, but was not very distinct, as the laundry door was closed; and as the wind sometimes made a noise, when blowing that way, in passing through the cracks in the door, they had paid no attention, and did not remember to have heard it again. Any one might have entered, and left the house without their knowledge; the laundry window did not look out in the yard.

Mrs. Kenlow, and Kitty were also sure that the parlor exhibited no signs of violence. Mrs. Doherty appeared to have risen from her chair, and fallen about a step from it. There was but one mark as of a blow, dealt from above, and by a powerful hand. No robbery had been committed, nothing to account for the awful deed. No one knew of her having any enemies; she was generally liked; bore the name of a good mistress, and an honourable woman; and though often sharp, and cutting in her remarks, was kind, and generous. Lakin had been engaged in the barn, and the dairyman had been assisting him in tying up bundles of straw, so that the domestic servants were not about the house.

The perfect simplicity of these details, only mystified the case, since it plunged the murderer in deeper obscurity.

"Who will be benefitted by her death?" inquired the magistrate.

Every eye was turned on Mr. Batally, but he did not shrink from the inquiring, and alarmed gaze, and readily accounted for his whereabouts. In company with Dr. Bower, he had left the house, to seek some wood ducks, he had informed him of, down the creek, and they had walked for about a mile conversing: then their roads diverging, Mr. Batally had proceeded down the creek, and Dr. Bower taken the bush road. Farther down he had met, and spoken to the shepherd, from him heard further tidings of the game, and proceeded five miles along the stream; afterwards, on his way home, he had again fallen in with the shepherd, and shown him the result of the day's sport; from thence he had come home to find his aunt a corpse.

No suspicion could rest upon him; and considering his selfish disposition, and indolent dissipated life, he was as moved, and saddened as any one could expect; indeed, he paced up and down the verandah all day, with a cigar in his mouth, and his hands stuffed in his pockets, and he even forgot to pay Gertrude any compliments; perhaps she was so pale, and heavy-eyed, that her looks provoked none.

"I believe we must leave this perplexing affair as we found it," said Mr. Rattnet the magistrate.

"I fear so," returned Dr. Bower, "time may turn up something."

"What do you think our deceased friend did about a will? Is she intestate, think you?"

"I am quite ignorant; Gertrude, my dear, do you know anything of this matter?"

She had heard Mrs. Doherty say her husband had made a will, years before his death, and she must see about something of the sort, next time she went to Sydney, and she mentioned the legal hands in which Mrs. Doherty's papers lay. Here again was no clue to the murderer.

Night had set in, and Mrs. Kenlow assisted the girls in preparing accommodations for the gentlemen, and at Dr. Bower's request, remained with Gertrude, whose strength was prostrated by the continued agitation, and alarm, to an extent necessitating care, and medical skill.

In the parlour, Dr. Bower, and Mr. Rattnett sat over a glass of hot spirits, and water, and relieved from the presence of Mr. Batally, who had retired to rest, discussed the circumstances more fully.

Mr. Rattnet was a small man, with a very red face, and grey hair, inclined to start up in a crest at the back of his head, and he usually stood, or walked, with his hands under his coat tails, and upon occasions of committing some thief, or other evil doer, or when presiding at a public meeting, and such grand occasions, had a habit of using a crimson silk handkerchief, with a loud, trumpeting noise. He always spoke as if he was stating upon oath, and was considered as eccentric, and kindhearted a man

as the country could produce.

He had evidently been struck with Gertrude's propriety of demeanour, and deep distress, and his remarks turned on her.

"What will become of this little girl, doctor?" he inquired.

"I cannot tell; Mrs. Doherty kept Gertrude much about her, and valued her exceedingly. She is a very superior person, and interesting."

"Particularly so: she cannot remain here."

Dr. Bower looked at him shrewdly, and remained silent.

"What! you think she may?" questioned Mr. Rattnet, bringing out the red handkerchief with a great flourish.

"I do not say she will."

"You think she will: of course we understand you are not speaking definitely; that is your impression," replied Mr. Rattnet, who had laid the emphasis on the wrong word.

"It is my impression that she will not," returned Dr. Bower, in a dry, decided tone.

"Hum! has she friends in the colony?"

"None. I shall speak to her on the subject; if I do not greatly mistake the girl, she will leave here immediately, and seek employment elsewhere."

Mr. Rattnet paced up and down, with his hands under his coat tails, and then returned to Mr. Batally's prospects. He indeed appeared likely to inherit all his aunt's effects; and it eventually proved that Dr. Doherty had left his property to his wife, and at her disposal, but should she die without heirs by a second marriage, or will, his property was to revert to his nearest relative; this by subsequent deaths, Mr. Batally had become. Suddenly therefore, he was lord of Murrumbowrie, and all other of Mrs. Doherty's properties, and possessions.

Going back to the days immediately following her death, there reigned a deep, sad gloom, only broken in Gertrude's case, by the support of religion, and a feverish desire to see Tudor again; but he came not, and the corpse was consigned to its resting place, the little enclosure on the hill side, where Dr. Doherty, and the infant Jackson reposed. Round this solemn spot the mourners, and spectators gathered, while a minister procured from a distance, committed the sacred dust to its narrow home. But the soul? Oh! who may answer that question! and the reality of its immortal nature weighed at least upon one present.

Still Tudor came not, nor news from him; and Gertrude, who had removed to the Kenlow's cottage, prepared to leave Murrumbowrie, with the additional sorrow of not bidding him farewell, the only being she had to look up to, and to love. She prayed, and longed for his coming, with a warmth she cared not to investigate; her kind, able protector, and adviser,

he who had ever watched over her, was perhaps hundreds of miles away, and quite unconscious of her wishes. She knew it, her confidence never wavered, and she tried to frame reasons for it; the rivers might be swollen—he might have left the Murrumbidgee before the messenger arrived there—he might even be ill. Any thing, but not untrue, never for one instant, did she doubt him. Others looked for him, and wondered; but none questioned his readiness, or ability.

But Gertrude must go, a thousand reasons impelled her to do so; and leaning on God, she found courage, and comfort in Him who comforteth us in all our distresses.

After a funeral, however simple the preparations, there follows a period of inaction, when the actual loss is perhaps more fully, and keenly realized than before; such a period set in gloomily over Murrumbowrie. The incidents, or rather want of incident, connected with the subject, were worn threadbare by constant discussion, and only the future movements on the farm, could offer any theme, sufficiently exciting to deserve comment.

Gertrude meanwhile was making hasty preparations to depart to Sydney: they were indeed simple, and wanted but little time to complete. Mr. Batally paid her the sum due for her wages; the generosity of Mrs. Doherty had left no want unsupplied, and therefore her little purse was rather heavy.

Among the neatest, and most thrifty of womankind however, it is impossible to start on a journey, without finding some previous exertions of the needle indispensable, and the young girl sat at the window, in Mrs. Kenlow's dwelling stitching quickly, though with dim eyes, and drooping head, taking an occasional glance over the prospect without, a farewell look. It was a dull scene at the best; great stiff stringybark trees all round, or where they had fallen before the axe, the stumps remained, bleached white, or charred, by some bush fire, to a sombre hue; in fact just then Gertrude thought it looked not unlike a graveyard: the grass was brown and dry, and the trees, every hue but green; their scanty branches casting little shade.

The hut stood in the midst of the forest quite alone, not even a garden, beyond a few cabbage plants, at a little distance, in an enclosure formed of dry branches and logs; she had become reconciled to the appearance of such bush huts in a great measure, but it struck her saddened senses just then, as particularly dreary, and wanting in taste; a rose, or honeysuckle trained up the rough grey slabs composing the walls, would have beautified the building not a little; and even Mrs. Kenlow's white curtains failed to add grace to the square openings in the wall, named windows, and which were closed by rough shutters; so much do outward objects depend, in their aspect, upon our own feelings in viewing them. "The world is what we

make it," some one remarks.

Just then, there was a sound of horses' feet, at rather an undignified trot, suggestive of an inexperienced rider; and a distressful female voice was heard calling—

"Miss Gertrude dear, are ye there? stop the baste, or I shall get an ugly fall anyway," and emerging from behind Kenlow's cabbage garden, there was Mary M'cMaster, in the full glory of a horse, and man's saddle, on which she sat sideways, with a shawl ingeniously twisted round her dress, to form a riding habit.

With a cry of joy, Gertrude bounded to meet her, and the old horse being satisfied that he had brought his burden to the right destination, suddenly stopped, and snapping his bridle out of her hand, began eagerly to crop the grass, as if that were his particular business there. To say that Mary was mistress of her horse, would be exceeding the precise truth, and after some little arguing, the matter was compromised by her alighting there, and suffering the old creature to follow the bent of his own inclinations.

"Sure Miss, dear," cried Mary, between laughing, and crying, "I'm so glad," and she clasped Gertrude in her arms, sobbing "I'm so glad."

"What distressed you so then, Mary?" returned she, as well as she could, for she was similarly affected.

"I'm full up," explained Mary, laying one of her large, red hands expressively above the regions of the heart, and then with another warm salute, she began to disentangle herself of the shawl.

"Will the horse not stray, Mary?" inquired Gertrude, busy in taking out sundry pins, which had confined her train.

"He's tired, poor baste, and small blame to him."

"How did you find your way from the gullies?"

"Pether came wid me as far as the house. Oh! Miss, dear, the poor old Missus! When I heard it, I just set me down and cried; bless her, she was a good cratur—and Pether said you were going to Sydney; 'faith an' it an't true,' says I."

"Yes it is, Mary, I shall start to-morrow."

"Get along wid ye," interrupted Mrs. M'cMaster, indignantly, "no, ye don't: come over to my place, Miss Gertrude dear. Ye shall have the best I can get ye; and our people will wait on ye like slaves; it's but a cabin, but Jack shall build ye a room, and—"

"My kind, good girl, I thank you most sincerely, but I must go—I could not live on the earnings of you, and your husband; but I have not asked after M'cMaster."

"He's hearty; but Miss Gertrude—" here Mary whispered, and looked very mysterious, as from some remote corner of a huge receptacle of her

treasures, she drew out an old glove, with the worn fingers knotted up, and a strip of leather, which had done service as a boot lace for her husband, securing the wrist part; accompanied by many ominous nods, Mary produced sundry tobacco-blackened shillings, and half crowns, and eagerly pushed them into Gertrude's hands.

"There, there," she cried, "that 'ill help ye, an' the blessing of God go wid ye, wherever ye go, Miss dear," and the generous creature was turning to gather up her shawl for a hasty departure. But Gertrude was sobbing on her shoulder, though she firmly refused the treasure, and finally carried the baffled Mary into the cottage.

Mrs. Kenlow, and Kitty welcomed her cordially, and the black kettle was hung over the fire, to heat water for a cup of tea, and the particulars of their former employer's death, discussed meanwhile.

When Gertrude went out to look after the horse, Mrs. Kenlow informed Mary that Gertrude was going to town to be married.

"Charley's in Sydney, and he told me only a few days before Mrs. Doherty was murdered, that he was going to marry her. She don't say nothing about it, she says her journey to town is to get a place; girls you know are shy about these things."

"In course," responded Mary approvingly, "So I am not to let on, ye tould me."

"No, no; we don't say anything, seeing she has the whim." Here Mrs. Kenlow suddenly exchanged the confidential tone and attitude, bending towards Mary, for a very upright posture, and unconcerned look, as Gertrude entered, who at once seeing that her presence had interrupted some private communication, immediately withdrew again.

However, during the rest of her visit, Mary was very mysterious, and a broad smile more than once followed a look at Gertrude, on the mention of her journey.

Mary could not return home till the morrow, and willingly consented to accept Mrs. Kenlow's hospitable offer of a domicile.

Mrs. M'cMaster led rather a solitary life in the gullies, and this probably disposed her to make full use of the present opportunity; whatever was the impetus, her conversational powers, and subjects appeared inexhaustible; and when Australian themes failed, she travelled over British reminiscences.

There is something affecting, and beautiful in the emigrant's term for his native land, invariably it is mentioned as *home*; how many an association gathers round the word, and dispels the idea of distance, and total estrangement, while battling with the difficulties of life, and the inconveniences and trials of colonial existence; there is still the resting

place—the home—as if the parental hearth were near, round which might again gather, those who were the companions of childhood: even the expression is often found adopted by the native born, for many a dear and treasured tie binds him to the land of his fathers; but the full force of the word, comes only from those whose memory has embalmed the word with ties, which time cannot break; and recollections that even with age, gain strength and clearness.

Mary could not have put this into words, but she felt it none the less, because she had not defined its outlines; and while Mrs. Kenlow baked thin dry cakes, bearing the rather tough name of “Leatherjackets,” upon the glowing embers, and Kitty subjected some cream to a vigorous whisking by means of a tin bowl, and a bunch of twigs, and presently displayed the result in the shape of a pot of pure sweet butter, Mary talked with Gertrude of “what they do at home in the country parts:” and although their countries were divided by the Irish Channel, the subject was not without mutual interest.

Kenlow and three large dogs here joined the party, and kept the room in some confusion at least, for Spring the kangaroo dog had thievish propensities, and he sat erect, dozing before the fire, with one eye fixed on Kitty's churning, and the other two, who were “surprising after a native cat, or a possum,” as Kenlow used to remark, were boisterously demonstrative of their presence, and expectancy of donations.

“My word, I do believe I'll kill them dogs” predicted Mrs. Kenlow with a flourish of a broom stick, in a general correcting kind of manner.

“I wouldn't take a fi' pound note for any of 'em—there—” returned Kenlow snapping his fingers at his favorites, which stirred them all up into a loud baying and pawing.

Kitty meanwhile spread the table, and the pile of ‘leatherjackets,’ baked to a cheerful brown were buttered, and filled the room with an inviting fragrance.

“You must eat hearty Gertrude, this is your last tea at the farm,” said Kenlow.

The reminder was unnecessary, though the invitation was exceedingly difficult to fulfil. The parting with her kind though humble friends was trying, additionally so, as it severed the last link, which bound her to Murrumbowrie, and the few so fondly loved, who had been her companions there.

Chapter XIX.

Man. Now by your leave, good friend,
Who may you be?"

Thos. A poor night traveller."

MRS. M. HOWITT.

Once Gertrude paused to look back at Murrumbowrie, to recall the peaceful, busy days past; to people again the distant houses with familiar forms. The brisk step, the bright eye, of her who was no more, rose up before her. The tall manly figure of Edward Tudor; and that firm, reliant mind, and spirit, which were always to be depended upon.

These, like pictures in a Magic Lantern, passed before her. The smiling face of Charley Inkersole—the cynical doctor—the moustached, impertinent, yet courteous present proprietor, and all the subordinate characters; and among them she stood alone: tears filled her eyes; and reality, and the past blended in the burning drops which veiled her sight.

Kenlow chirrupped on the old horse that drew the cart in which she sat, and they proceeded on their way to the nearest Township, passing one night at the Rocky Creek. How different from the previous visits she had paid there; the first with Tudor, the other, accompanied by Mrs. Doherty; and her quivering nerves seemed inadequate to the task of listening to Dugdale's, and his daughter's questions and remarks, while Kenlow related the losses of property already; the advantages many had taken to rob the incompetent heir, and prophesied that "it would slip through his fingers, like water."

"Mr. Tudor is not down yet?" inquired Dugdale.

"No."

"I wonder at that, he is so active."

"Well, it seems a long time, but it's only half the time he usually is; and if Jim did not overtake him, he won't hurry till he hears the news; so that all things considered, he could not be down before."

"Was Jim pretty steady?"

"Very, if he kept from drink, but if he took a glass, he is the very—" and Kenlow assigned a rather dark character to the messenger.

Maria led Gertrude into the little parlour, just the same bright, pretty place as formerly; and made her take off her bonnet, and mantle.

"And where are you going?" she inquired kindly.

“To Sydney. To Mrs. Kenlow's sister; where I can stay till I get a place.”

“What! Will you go to service?”

“What else could I do?”

“For the present you mean—Well if I was him I wouldn't let you,” muttered Maria walking off with the bonnet; and pursuing something of Betsey's opinion of him.

Gertrude was too sad to inquire into the cause of her displeasure.

* * * * *

Mrs. Lenny, the widowed sister of Mrs. Kenlow was keeping a corn store, near Brickfield Hill. A shed with its dusty beams and posts knocking together, as if they had the palsy, rose before the dwelling; and under this shelter of green decaying shingles, were displayed sundry tempting oranges, and apples; or peaches, and grapes, as the season might be, with cadaverous shrivelled pineapples, cruelly bruised bananas, with a jolly faced melon, or trumpet pumpkin, backed up by trusses of hay, and bags of maize; among which, a steep flight of steps led “the nighest way” Mrs. Lenny said to the house.

Gertrude was not expected; she had come down by the mail, with a letter from Mrs. Kenlow to her sister; “which explained all about it.” She found by dint of enquiring, her way to the desired spot, and presented herself, and introduction.

“Bless me!” ejaculated Mrs. Lenny, and so Mrs. Doherty is murdered! we saw something about it in the papers: but come in, and tell all about it.

Gertrude followed her up the steep steps with a very aching heart; something struck upon her sensibilities, a sense of uncongeniality, and that she was not, and could not be understood; that there was a gulf between her, and her present companion, that could never be filled by kindness, or good wishes; unless, and a shudder passed over her frame, unless she sank to their level. From henceforth, she was really to be a servant, and a bitter fear of herself took possession of her. She might gradually sink to the low mental level of her roundfaced hostess; not but she was well, even richly dressed, and the parlour had no lack of papier machè, and china ornaments, and a gay large patterned carpet, and green window curtains, and some good furniture; but it was badly arranged, and everything bore the same vulgar impress.

Mrs. Lenny sat down in an arm chair, and called her daughter Julia, to come and see the lady who had brought a letter from ‘auntie’; and a good-looking, white-faced girl answered the summons, with that cold, stiff manner, that the ignorant mistake for good breeding.

It was impossible to keep up conversation; Gertrude said as little as she

could about the sad changes at Murrumbowrie.

Julia read her aunt's letter, and then remarked, "Miss Gertrude will stay with us, mamma."

"Yes, you must stay with us for a while, Miss Gertrude. When do you expect the young man down?"

Gertrude supposed she meant Tudor, and replied, "I did not think he was coming to Sydney."

"Oh! I made a mistake; I thought he was in Sydney."

"No, at the station, Ma'am."

"Yes, I understand: at the station, seeing after things." And the mother, and daughter exchanged glances.

Gertrude felt rather annoyed; and quite ignorant of their meaning; but Julia, who was a good-natured girl, when she could surmount excessive gentility, remembered that their visitor must be tired, and hungry, and with the aid of an untidy girl, fragrant of onions, soon supplied her wants liberally, and then when the meal was scantily discussed, led her to her own apartment, to change her dress.

"I am so glad you came to-day," remarked she, "for we are to have a party to-night, and a dance. Have you a dress?"

Gertrude looked appalled, and answered in the negative.

"Never mind, we will manage that; one of mine, with the least possible alteration, will do. You are rather smaller than me."

"Thank you, but indeed I could not, I am too sad." A great witness of the inward sorrow fell from under her drooping lids.

"Oh! you must cheer up for the party, it would be such a pity to miss it."

"I cannot dance."

"Never mind, I will show you the step, and I'll get my brother Tom to dance with you, and he can tell you what to do," and she went off in reminiscences, and anticipations of parties, past, and future.

The sense of desolation was increasing so rapidly upon Gertrude, that it threatened to become unbearable at no distant time, and she restrained a fit of tears with considerable effort.

Evening did come, and so many ladies, and gentlemen gyrating in so small a space, hopping and shuffling through polkas, had never fallen to her share to witness.

Under the plea of a headache, she might have said heartache, which indeed is generally understood to be meant by the former, Gertrude escaped joining in the scene.

Brother Tom soon found a much more sprightly partner, in the young lady who superintended the bonnet department, in one of the fine Pitt street drapery establishments; and if being very hot, and fatigued, and crushed

into a small space, constitutes happiness, the whole party enjoyed themselves amazingly: indeed, when the windows were opened to let in the sea breeze, and a crowd of mosquitoes swept in, attracted by the candles, enjoyment must have reached a climax rarely attained.

All the young men were exceedingly polite, and “the ladies” appeared to be the objects of their great devotion, while they were elegance itself.

Gertrude, from a quiet corner behind the table, which had been pushed aside, watched the new phase of life opening up to her view, with very grave, philosophical eyes, and weighed the whole as “lighter than vanity.” Then, in the midst of Miss Smith's brilliant execution of the ‘Fire Fly’ polka, and the accompanying heavy tread of the dancers, her thoughts wandered back to that last evening before Tudor left for the station, and the rational, intellectual feast they had had, and a low sigh escaped her.

After a while, Mrs. Lenny came to enquire after her headache, and see if she would like to retire to rest, and very gladly she crept away to weep in solitude, as she had done every unobserved moment since she left Murrumbowrie.

Chapter XX.

“Oh! trust not, cling not to the hope
Of constancy below;
Aye, even in life's meanest things,
This is a world of change.”

MRS. ABDY.

“We see but dimly through the mists and vapours;
Amid these earthly damps;
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers,
May be Heaven's distant lamps.”

LONGFELLOW.

GERTRUDE had come to Sydney to seek employment, and although borne down by dejection, and uncertainty, she resolved to let no longer time elapse in idleness.

“What will you do with yourself, to-day?” inquired Julia Lenny, breaking in upon her meditations.

“I do not know.”

“I am going across the water to visit some friends; will you come?”

Gertrude did not feel inclined, and excused herself.

“Ma will be busy all day; shall I give you my crochet? I am making an anti-macassar, see, a dove with a sprig in its bill; do you see its head? And there's one wing just begun.” She held the piece up by the corners.

Gertrude admired it, and expressed her willingness to assist.

“If you get tired with sitting, you might walk ‘up town’ in the afternoon, when the ladies are out walking.”

“Thank you,” returned Gertrude, marvelling why all times of the day were not equally genteel.

Julia retired to make her toilet, and presently presented herself, looking very pretty, if overdressed; the silk of her gown was too bright to please Gertrude, and the flowers in her bonnet rather in excess; but it was with a very warm, kindly smile, she looked up from the mysteries of the dove's olive branch of peace, which it carried in its bill.

“Oh! how nice you do it, and so clean,” said Julia, pausing to examine. “Don't bother yourself with it, Miss Gertrude.”

“It amuses me, thank you.”

“Good bye then; I shall not be in till after tea,” and she stooped over Gertrude, and imprinted a kiss on her fair brow, before she ran out of the room.

The little act of kindness had opened the floodgates of tears, and for a while, crochet, and doves, and olives were all forgotten, in a deep, and passionate fit of tears. “But this will never do; what would Mr. Tudor say, if he saw me give way so?”

The reflection, which was intended to strengthen, only proved the reverse; and a second burst of tears succeeded, which left her leaning on the sofa arm, and her energies painfully exhausted; but if the thoughts of earthly friends had failed to comfort, the remembrance of Heavenly guardianship was far otherwise. She drew her bible from her pocket, and read, and gradually the quivering nerves became calm, and the despairing thoughts fled, whilst from her very heart, called up the words—

“Oh! spread thy covering wings around,
Till all my wanderings cease;
And at my Father's blest abode,
My soul arrives in peace.”

After this, crochet had less charms, and was so often unripped, that it threatened to be any thing but deserving of the praise Miss Julia had bestowed upon it; and after a listless morning, and apology for dinner, she put on her bonnet, and strolled out.

A brisk sea breeze was scattering clouds of dust along the streets, woefully changing the hues of the goods exposed at the shop doors, and penetrating every where, and every thing. The sun was still bright and the heat excessive; and the green fields of England, and the wide silent forests of the Australian interior, rose up before her eyes in painful contrast.

After a while, as she paused to wipe the dust from her eyes, and endeavour to keep her curls, and veil from fluttering in the air like streamers, an announcement above a door met her eyes; ‘such a one's Registry Office for Females.’ Her heart beat—what was before her? A life of servitude. Had she not better enter, and endeavour to obtain a situation? There was a painful struggle; and duty gained the ascendant, so she stepped forward.

The room was crowded with women, chiefly young, well, and even stylishly dressed: some were silent, and grave, others smiling, and whispering to some companion, or attending to those persons standing in the middle of the room. One was the Registry Agent evidently, and the girls looked up to her as if she were one of the three sisters, the Fates,

commissioned by destiny to arbitrate between them and fortune; the two others were an elderly, and a young lady; the elder was scanning through an eyeglass, a little stout 'maid of all work' before her, questioning her in a severe tone, whilst the younger played with her parasol, and appeared indifferent to the result.

Gertrude's courage failed, and she drew back, and walked rapidly a few steps in an opposite direction—"but I must do it—I must," she uttered, pausing—then began a severer, more protracted struggle. The wind, and consequently the dust, had increased, and she stood, her mantle, and veil fluttering in the wind, and the tears, which in spite of her efforts, were coursing down her cheeks, dropping on to her clasped hands; an earnest prayer uttered for guidance, and once more she mounted the doorstep. The ladies were about to depart, and she drew back to allow them to pass, something in the pale, sad face struck the younger lady, and she smiled kindly upon her. The trivial act of sympathy went home to Gertrude's heart, and though she turned unconsciously from the door, and followed up the street in a profound fit of musing, she felt more courageous and hopeful. Presently she came in violent collision with a mass of satin, and more solid materials, and looking up in wonder, found a stout old lady before her.

"Bless the gal!" exclaimed that individual, "why can't you look where you're going."

"I beg your pardon Ma'am, I hope I did not hurt you."

The meek tones pacified her wrath.

"Hurt, no—but laws a me—so you are," and she took Gertrude's arm, and pushed her back a step, to take a better view.

"I've seen you before, young woman," was the remark, when she had satisfied herself as to the identity.

"I think Ma'am, you must be mistaken."

"No, I am not; I never be mistaken."

Gertrude was silent, not venturing to question her infallibility.

"You are the young woman as went up the country with Mrs. Doherty."

"Yes!" eagerly returned the other, "did you know her?"

At the mention of that name, the fat coarse being before her had changed in aspect in her estimation, she could have run into the old lady's arms, for very delight.

"Yes, to be sure; don't you remember me now?"

"No, Ma'am, I can't say—"

"We met at Mrs. Lodge's 'commodation house; don't you mind now."

"There were so many persons."

Her companion looked as if she were not easily mistaken for other people; and said, "my name is Hopper, Mrs. Hopper, and I am the lady

Mrs. Doherty refused the sofee to.”

The whole scene rose before Gertrude's mind with a ludicrous coloring, which would have provoked a smile, but for the previous depression; so she apologised for her want of memory, and hoped Mrs. Hopper was well.

“Yes, young woman, I'm nicely; and now let us walk on—I'm glad I met you—where are you now?”

“I am staying with a Mrs. Lenny in town.”

“Indeed! I know her; she is a friend of mine,” and finding Gertrude was about to return home, she offered to accompany her.

Wondering much, the young emigrant thanked her, and the two proceeded in the desired direction.

“So she was murdered! I didn't wonder, such pride must have a bad end; I always looked for something dreadful after that time.”

Gertrude's budding friendship was rudely nipped by this remark, and she returned with some energy, “Indeed Ma'am, you are mistaken in supposing dear Mrs. Doherty deserved such a fate; she was the kindest, and best of women.”

A choking sensation, a struggle with a sob stopped her, and a fresh puff of wind, bearing on it, a ‘brickfielder,’ prevented further conversation; and to get into an omnibus, and ride down the street, was their mutual desire, and action.

Mrs. Lenny welcomed her visitor warmly, and evidently considered her a person of some consequence, and Gertrude gladly ran away to wash her dusty face, and brush her disordered hair; and then after a few minutes' quiet study of her book, she returned to the little parlour, refreshed physically, and mentally by the words “In all thy ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths,” laid in her heart for a foundation stone, for hope, and patience to build upon.

The room was redolent of toast, and young onions, when she returned to the parlour; and Mrs. Lenny in a new cap, brilliant with geranium colored ribands, was prepared to hospitably entertain her guest.

Mrs. Hopper although by no means indifferent to the good things of life, was too true a daughter of Eve not to be curious; and it did occur to Gertrude, that her satisfaction in seeing her arose from this very propensity, for she went into a close examination of the murder, in a manner peculiarly distressing to the young girl; no item escaped her, and the possibilities, and impossibilities of identifying the murderer, were balanced with a skill, that would have done credit to one of the legal profession. Mrs. Hopper fully understood the criminal code of laws.

It was a distressing evening to Gertrude; but for that foundation, and the hopes built upon it, she never could have borne it; but the loss of the tender

and watchful care which during her residence at Murrumbowrie had surrounded her, were so obviously wanting, that she felt more than ever desolate.

After a while Julia returned, and made a diversion by relating sundry pieces of news she had heard during her visit; yet Gertrude felt increasingly out of her element; the people they spoke of were all strangers to her, and their affairs perfectly uninteresting; nor did the last fashion in bonnets, nor a new crochet lace design interest her in any degree. "I really am both ungrateful and proud," she said, chidingly to herself: "but I am so unlike them, and I am sure I do not wish to be like." Later in the evening Mrs. Hopper rose to depart.

"I must not lose the last bus," said she "but Miss Gonthier I hope you will come out and see me; I live—" and a minute description of the suburb, and street, and house followed, and a speedy visit warmly urged. Gertrude thanked her, inwardly determining never to go; for Mrs. Hopper's investigating propensities had alarmed her, and her coarse showy attempts at gentility shocked her sense of refinement. During the evening she had gathered from allusions to "Hopper, poor dear man," that her new-old acquaintance was a widow, and from remarks upon the bar, and the public line, and such like things, concluded his calling had been that of an innkeeper; Mrs. Hopper, she found, had retired from business, and lived on her fortune, which report stated to be far from inconsiderable.

"I consider you very fortunate, Miss Gertrude," remarked Mrs. Lenny, when her visitor had departed, "Mrs. Hopper's a rich open-hearted woman, you are very lucky; she is sure to make you a very handsome present—I told her all about it when you left the room, before tea." And she drew herself up with a satisfied, and mysterious air.

Gertrude looked surprised, and disclaimed all expectations of such munificence.

"Now if you were wanting it, there would be a home for you."

The girl shuddered at the very thought. Julia joined in, and gave her a detailed account of carpets, vases, pierglasses, etc.; with adjectives attached to them, sufficient to transport the fancy into some fairy region of palaces; strangely enough, Gertrude's mind was reviewing the first meeting at the accommodation house—her kind friend and employer—the bright, smiling face of the young bushman—and then travelling up the road to Tudor—and the first meeting there—and thinking how could it be that she had feared him so, and even resolved never to see, or speak to him, if she could avoid it. Oh! if she could only tell her difficulties to him now, and seek his guidance. So that 'real cut glass'—'a hundred guineas, but it is a beauty, and such a dove'—'just the size of life, in oils,' were blended

confusedly together, and left a most indefinite impression of a succession of wonders, which Julia expected her to acknowledge by exclamations of 'dear me,' 'indeed,' 'is it possible,' and which it afterwards seemed to her, she must have brought in, with ludicrous inaptitude.

Gertrude had been used to a life of incessant activity, each moment had found its occupation; but this day had been spent in listlessness. Julia Lenny if not employed with her crochet, or unless she had just borrowed a new book, had no resources; and Gertrude, thrown out of her wonted pursuits, sought in vain for substitutes.

Julia had many friends, who looked in frequently for a little chat, but the subjects of conversation were uninteresting to any beyond their own circle; and her books were chiefly the adventures of sundry beautiful young ladies, who the world had conspired together to persecute, but who finally triumphed over all adverse circumstance, and entered upon some matrimonial Elysium of bliss.

Gertrude remembered the objection Tudor had to such works, and therefore did not read them. The old habit of obedience still clung to her. She would never see him again, in all probability; but that did not render her following his advice, or prohibitions less imperative: she thought more of his advice than Mrs. Doherty's, for hers was a mind less under control, and therefore more prone to erroneous judgments, and to be led away by prejudices; thus she was thinking of them, and resolving about another visit to the 'Fates,' when Julia broke in upon her meditations.

"Miss Gertrude, does Catherine talk of coming to town?"

"I have heard her express a wish to see you."

"I wish her Ma would let her—she ought to have a year's finishing."

Gertrude looked interrogatively.

"It's a sin she don't learn the piano," pursued Julia.

Kenlow's log hut, with its earthen floor, and the chickens picking at the door, and one of Mrs. Kenlow's famous great 'dampers' fresh from the ashes, cooling at the glassless window, presented themselves to Gertrude's mind, and a half exclamation of surprise escaped her.

"Her Pa ought to let her have a year's schooling; she might go to the same lady I did, it would do her good."

Gertrude thought that questionable; but replied "Kitty has not been to Sydney, I think."

"No never, her mother used to come down now and then—how I should like to see her: what is she like?"

The description was very favourable, and her cousin was strengthened in her desire to have Kitty introduced to town life.

"I shall write to her about it I do declare, some of these days. I wish you

were going to stay in town.”

“Thank you.”

“It must be very dull in the bush.”

“I never found it so, I was always employed, and it seems to me that inactivity alone can make time a burden. There are many trials which deprive life of its charms, but still it need not be a burden, if we are using our abilities, whether of mind, or body, for some desirable end.”

“La!” ejaculated Julia, for want of a better reply.

“Did you ever think of the value of a day, and how much good may be done in it?” pursued Gertrude, rather timidly.

“No, what?”

“I do not mean any set task. There are objects all round us which we can benefit.”

Her companion looked rather vacant, and she said no more; but the longing for a congenial mind grew stronger.

Mrs. Lenny here woke up from a nap with a start; she had been reclining in a large arm chair, and uttering sounds, which bore a great resemblance to snoring.

The view which Gertrude was taking of Sydney, was through a very distorted medium; no wonder then, that she had no desire to remain in it. The cultivated intellects, the learned, and the refined, were placed an immeasurable distance beyond her, and she was ignorant of their existence. Mrs. Lenny like her sister Mrs. Kenlow, was a native of the colony, and united a kind heart to a narrow mind; her world was Sydney, she knew and valued nothing beyond.

At Murrumbowrie, it had been otherwise: those who were not Europeans, were united to the old country by parentage, and by the sympathies which an European literature awakens. Thence was the source from which flowed the streams, which cultivated the soul, and watered the mental field. Thence was the storehouse from which the craving intellect sought, and found its nourishment.

Hail to the world of letters, which binds the human family together, which oversteps the wild waste of waters, which recognises neither the limits of country, nor tongue—a mighty engine for weal, or woe.

Kitty, and other country Australians, Gertrude had met, were certainly more ignorant than Julia Lenny, but they aimed at less, and therefore their shortcomings were not so palpably felt, nor so conspicuous to the casual observer. True, Gertrude was herself but one of the lowly in station, and knowledge; but there is an innate refinement which has no affinity with the low minded in any station.

The morrow proved more eventful than she had anticipated; in searching

for the Registry Office, she met a young woman who had come out in the same vessel from England, a ruddy country girl with a face expressive of simplicity and good-nature, her light hair neatly parted across her brow, which had not yet been hued by an Australian climate. Casual as their acquaintance had been, it was enough to make them meet with pleasure, and each enquired after the other's fortunes with heartfelt interest: each had her own tale to relate. Eliza's was the story of the Emigrant's struggles, and of looming success.

"Father and mother have a bit of land on a clearing lease; and brothers live with them, except John, and he's hired to go to Melbourne."

"What a long way!"

"Yes, but he will come back again when his time's up."

There was such perfect confidence in the girl's tone and look; such unhesitating repose in John's good faith, that it sent a pang to Gertrude's heart, to think how many things, perhaps even death, might occur to prevent his return.

"And are not you living with them?" she enquired after they had walked a short distance in silence.

"No, I am in service just out of town."

This reply led Gertrude to explain her business in Sydney, and to receive intelligence that the persons with whom Eliza lived were in want of a nursery governess. The latter word startled her; but being assured that her capabilities were quite equal to their requirements, she ventured to accompany the girl home.

A large and elegant residence, surrounded by a garden adorned with splendid foreign plants, and kept with great care, was their destination. It was situated on a height overlooking the waters of Port Jackson, which, in that breezeless day, glistened in pellucid tranquillity, dotted over by tiny boats, and here and there a ship at anchor; far the greater part of the town, and docks were out of sight, while one noble ship, her white sails like true messengers of peace spread to court the wind, slowly moved down the harbour, so slowly that it appeared stationary: high and sombre lay the brown scrub covered hills around the port; with metal roofs glittering like minor suns, and white walls reflecting the light told the place of homes in the distance.

Gertrude's courage had been at a low ebb, as she toiled along the hot dusty road, but the exhilarating influences of nature were not without their effect upon her, and the group of children sporting in the verandah, with word and laugh musical as the wood notes of the creeper, were enough to make her feel at home.

Mrs. Walton was reclining upon a sofa, as Gertrude was ushered into her

presence; she was a beautiful woman hardly past youth, but the clear skin traced by blue veins, and the feverish flush on the cheek, and brilliant eye told their own tale.

“Be seated,” she said as Gertrude explained her mission. “I really am sorry that I have just engaged a young person; are you an emigrant, or a native girl?”

“An emigrant ma'am,” and she described the locality of her native village, and of Comb Ending.

“I know it well, I have been there, and sketched the old church—it was a fine building once, and even its ruins are grand—yes I remember the ivy crowned pile, well, and the large yew trees—and you come from Comb Ending.” The invalid raised herself on her elbow; the mention of the old familiar place, stirred her feeble pulse. “I too,” she said “am English, a Kentish woman.” There was a little satisfaction in the latter words; “and I have come here for my health.”

“You are not very strong I fear?” returned Gertrude.

“No not very, but I am better—much better than I was before we left home. I was ordered by my physicians to reside in a warmer climate, and having a brother here we came out. I shall soon be well I hope, but Mr. Walton must return to England; he only came here to establish me comfortably; and his engagements require his presence at home. I wish for some one who could take charge of, and instruct my little ones, above a nurse, a respectable girl, who would be a good example to them.”

“And you have met with such a person,” returned Gertrude sadly.

“I have, I could almost say unfortunately, for I do not think the young person will suit me so well as you would have done.” The lady reclined her head on the pillow, passing her wax-like fingers over her brow, as a transitory weariness overspread her countenance—it might be a fear for a moment entertained, that she would see her native land, and her husband when he had parted from her, no more: or perhaps she was fatigued.

Gertrude hardly restrained her tears, as she beheld the too evident symptom of hopeless disease; just then the glass door communicating with the verandah was pushed gently open, and a tall gentlemanly person entered; he was some years the senior of the lady, and the high brow bore the pencilling of deep and long thought, and the dark hair was mingled with silver.

A few words from his wife introduced Gertrude, and drawing a chair near the sofa he sat down to make some kind enquiries after her health.

“I am grieved Edmund” she said, “that this young person should be disappointed; she wants to meet with a quiet respectable home: could we do anything for her?”

“I wish my dear that we could, but we are strangers, and I must so soon leave; but Miss Gonthier, if I can assist you in any way apply to me.”

Tears stood in her eyes as she thanked him; she felt that they were far above not only her, but the inhabitants of Murrumbowrie, and any she had hitherto mixed with. The soft courteous manners, the utter absence of the fear of lessening a tottering dignity by urbanity to inferiors, marked their real gentility; and almost a murmuring regret oppressed her, that she could not have made one, however humble her position, in that household.

Bitter and long was the fit of weeping which followed the closing of the high iron gate; the poor invalid had awakened her sympathy; the clinging to the hopes of recovery, and the brilliancy which her fatal malady gave to her beauty, surrounded the certainty of death with added gloom; she longed to know where her hopes for the future were placed.

The stands of beautiful flowers, the books glittering in azure, crimson, and gold, the choice engravings, and the open piano, told of mental culture and refinement, but all these must soon cease to alleviate her situation, must soon be for ever parted from. The repining thought was stifled in an earnest prayer for her; she sought comfort too in thinking that she might perhaps be able to take advantage of Mr. Walton's kind offer, which she felt sure was given in sincerity: the erect bearing, the firm calm eye, were securities of integrity, even as the kind modulation of the voice were of benevolence.

She lingered awhile to take a farewell view of the harbour. The sun drawing near the horizon cast upon the clouds a brilliant reflection of crimson, faithfully portrayed on the water.

“So true, so soft, the mirrors gave,
As if there lay beneath the wave,
Secure from trouble, toil and care,
A world than earthly world more fair.”

SIR W. SCOTT.

And the wake in the track of the shipping spread out in rays like gleams from burnished silver; and faintly the sounds of busy humanity broke upon the silence, telling of how “man goeth forth unto his labours until the evening.” The lateness of the hour curtailed her examination of the scene, but did not rob her of the lesson it bore. “Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out; he is excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice; he will not afflict,” and the tears of regret were sweetened by resignation, whilst she chided herself for the bitterness of those regrets.

Shall not the Judge of the world do right she asked herself. Then came one of those long retrospective musings which the evening hours are so adapted to awaken, and she traced her footsteps over the sod of Britain, and through her devious windings, lingering long round her late home at Murrumbowrie; she wondered how it looked now, in the hands of its present proprietor; and she repeated with pride that while he was a specimen of a class who migrate from the old to the new country, he was no specimen of the English nation at large, and she knew that the Australians he had mixed with were not ignorant enough to think him so, when so many men whose talents and worth are antagonistic to such a supposition are sprinkled over the land: they might despise his class, but they could not his country, nor his countrymen.

Chapter XXI.

“Friendship hath passed me like a ship at sea.”

FESTUS.

WHEN again Edward Tudor returned to the farm, only by the perfectly grave face could any one guess how much he felt. The murderer must be found, he said, and adopted every method to do so; meanwhile amidst his other cares he did not delay a visit to Mrs. Kenlow. She had much to say about Mrs. Doherty; and Tudor rather suffered her to go on than encouraged her; his visit there was not for condolence, but information.

“Miss Gonthier has left,” he said presently.

“Yes, she went to Sydney the day before yesterday.”

“Do you know her reason for such a hasty departure?”

“Well, she went to be married, I suppose. Mr. Inkersole's in Sydney.”

Tudor did not betray what he felt; and she went on. “I am glad of it; for she is such a nice girl; and she will have some one to protect her.”

“Are you sure of this?” he said, with apparent unconcern.

“Oh, yes. Charley told me often he was going to marry her; he was looking after old O'Donnell's run at the Fish River, it was about that he went to town, just about the time poor Mrs. Doherty was murdered. My word! what a turn it gave me when the old doctor said she had been murdered.”

Mrs. Kenlow drooped her head genteelly on one side. Her visitor folded his arms, and fixed a moody pair of eyes upon the floor for sometime; while his brows worked uneasily.

“Yes, I was glad of Gertrude's settling poor girl!” pursued Mrs. Kenlow; “now don't you think it is a good thing, Mr. Tudor?”

He gave a short abrupt bow, whether of assent or dissent would be hard to say; and she continued describing the genteel society Gertrude would enjoy while staying with her sister, till she married. Presently Tudor rose, and leaving a message for Kenlow departed.

He was proud, very proud: not the little pride of wealth, or high birth; nor arrogance to inferiors, nor contempt of superiors, but of his own feelings, he was nervously sensitive, pride partially arising from a refined mind, partially from the very strength of his nature, which had hitherto been unchecked by religion; and which for the future would be regarded as a besetting sin, to be prayed against and struggled with.

To conceal from all, his bitter disappointment, became the great object of his exertions, and he succeeded: for no one could suppose that erect form, and grave, stern brow, concealed a heart, tender and loving as a woman's. The past with all its bright dreams was buried in the grave of the friend he had loved so warmly, and so faithfully served; and he mentioned them not: but after mature deliberation addressed a letter to Gertrude: a polite, kind, but distant farewell; and an explanation which he deemed due to himself, of the reason he had not hastened to obey her letter of entreaty to return. The messenger had when two days journey from the farm, become intoxicated, with the money given him to defray the expenses of his journey; lost the letter; been robbed of the saddle and bridle; the horse impounded; and in a state of intoxication the man had engaged in sundry pugilistic encounters, the result of which, was his being consigned to prison in default of a fine—therefore Tudor had not heard of Mrs. Doherty's death, till he had reached a locality where the papers had conveyed the intelligence; and then his return had been rapid. The last sentence puzzled her; it was this, "In bidding you farewell, for ever, I cannot resist, wishing you happiness in the future you have chosen." Then he signed himself "yours respectfully."

Gertrude wept bitterly over the cold formal letter: though it was really kind: but constrained: while he, believing that he had done all that honor permitted, bid adieu to Murrumbowrie, and started for his home, and his kind mother. Not to remain inactive: but to see her, and his brother and sister; and then to plunge once more into the busy stir of life; a saddened, disappointed man; but no longer likely to become the austere and iron ruler. He was a Christian! and firmness was tempered by gentleness.

Kitty Kenlow also wrote to Gertrude a summary of news; which in part may help in making clear some of the actions of others, as well as herself.

"Mr. Batally" she wrote, "offered Mr. Tudor to stay: he spoke in an off-hand manner, like as if he was ordering him to do so, father says; for he was standing by; and he says, he never saw any one look so high and proud as Mr. Tudor did: but he spoke quite quietly, and said "he would only stay to give up all he had in charge." Mr. Batally says he shall manage everything himself, most of the old people are leaving. We are going to Windsor, father has a little farm there."

Then followed a long account of the further movements of the other members of the establishment; and she concluded, "Mr. Tudor I believe has saved money; and I think he will do for himself. Father says, he thinks he will leave this part of the country altogether: he seems so cut up: though he don't say nothing: it would make your heart ache to see the quiet way he goes about; doing things just as he used; mustering the cattle, and counting

the sheep over to Mr. Batally. On horseback all day, and making up the accounts of an evening; and looking as white as a sheet. He has been trying every thing to find the murderer. It is so long since it happened or he would have tracked the steps from the house: he says that it ought to have been done: but no more at present from, &c., &c.”

And here then was Gertrude, really and truly alone, and deserted, through a miserable series of misunderstanding. Despair gave her energy to act, and after a night of prayer and thought, she resolved to think and act as if the past had never been: not that it could be forgotten, nor did she wish to forget it, but it must not cumber the present. Her life had not been one of chance, therefore it must be right: faith received the assurance, while reason was baffled, and confounded.

“What is the best way to get a place?” she enquired the next day, following out her train of resolves.

“A place!” enquired Mrs. Lenny's eldest daughter, who was only then on a visit to her mother.

“I wish for a situation. If I could get it, such a one as I have filled; or a needlewoman; or a responsible one of any kind.”

“La! What for?” exclaimed Julia.

“I cannot intrude upon you. I must earn my living.”

“For awhile.”

“As long as I live most probably: certainly [I] must now be no longer idle.”

“I shall be going home the end of this week, said the elder sister, who was a dress-maker, and if you like to go with me, you can help us for a bit, till you look round you: something may turn up.”

Gertrude thanked her, and accepted the offer.

Chapter XXII.

Familiar things would all seem strange,
And pleasure past, be woe;
A record sad of ceaseless change
Is all the world below.

H. COLERIDGE.

TRANSPLANTED once again into the country, though far from her former abode, Gertrude found herself placed as of underling beneath Miss Turkinton, the lady who graced Miss Lenny's shop, with an icy smile, and fine complexion, and did millinery work. Under her wing Gertrude was trimming a cap, and pondering somewhat confusedly about sheep shearing, and winter evenings: the uncleared mystery of murder; and wandering off to sundry rolls of ribbons, and lace black and white, blond and tarlatan, and rice, and chip, and tuscan straw, and various other things in connexion with the drapery line, when a female head popped in at the door, followed by a long straight body, in rather scanty drapery. A bonnet of white blond, surrounding a face contracted into sundry creases and puckers by an agreeable smile.

"Well! my dear," she said to Miss Turkinton, who scarcely deigned to notice her, and looked like an iceberg, in her genteel unconcern.

"I just popped in, to see if my little bonnet was trimmed yet."

"No Miss Watchorn, it is not," returned that young lady coldly.

"Will it be done to-day my dear?" pursued the visitor, sinking into a chair, which Gertrude had instinctively placed for her, with such a polite air that Miss Watchorn's eyes appeared rivetted to her countenance, for some five minutes afterwards.

"No Miss Watchorn, I said yesterday afternoon, and yesterday morning, and the evening before, that it could not be done this week," and Miss Turkinton turned to her work, with as much warmth as an iceberg in an arctic summer's day.

"That's very provoking—because—you know—eh, my dear," and Miss Watchorn nodded with a world of meaning, and compressed her lips as if to keep down something she could say but would not.

"Could I?"—Gertrude began, always sensitive of disappointing, and quite overcome by the nods. "A baby could: it's only altering the ribbons to the fashion," remarked Miss Turkinton without looking up.

"Then ma'am I'll try and do it to-day." The visitor nodded approvingly,

and expressed her satisfaction in a few broken sentences. "Ha! my dear, very kind. I want it you know, because—Tea meeting, you know"—she nodded mysteriously. Gertrude did not know, but renewed her promise.

"Remember there's Miss Betty O'Brien's wedding dress, and bonnet, and her ten bridesmaids', and Miss Lenny is gone out to a party," suggested Miss Turkinton: who was considered the beauty of that township, and very ladylike. She certainly was never caught in a bustle; never showed any vulgar symptoms of pleasure at any sacrifice made on her account; it made quite an impression, and the rustic swains looked as silly as possible, as they paid her a compliment over the counter, stealing in behind their sister, or cousin, and "standing treat" of a bonnet, or veil for the sake of seeing the beauty. It was quite distressing to think how much the unfortunate youths must have squandered, to get their fair friends presents, as an excuse for the great pleasure.

"I'll sit up a bit," returned Gertrude, and Miss Turkinton's face said, "very green," but she went on working. And Gertrude did sit up till one o'clock; and pricked her fingers, and almost nodded her curls into the candle flame, before it was done: but she had her own peculiar reward. The next day too fully requited her, when she saw Miss Watchorn's evident pleasure in the renovation her bonnet had undergone. "It looked better than new. Very well indeed, for a bush girl.—Hope you'll come and see me some day, my dear,—have heard all about it,—him—you know.—Miss Lenny let me into it."

Gertrude promised to visit, and tried to look bright and satisfied; and she gathered Miss Betty O'Brien's sky blue tarlatan flounces.

"Thank goodness that old bore's gone!" remarked the beauty, when Miss Watchorn departed.

"Did you hear what a party Miss O'Brien's going to give?"

"No. How many parties they have down here! they seem party mad"—Gertrude had nearly committed herself, by saying—Miss Turkinton looked coldly shocked at her ignorance, and remarked "It will be very stylish—there are about one hundred invited, I've got an invitation, and Miss Lenny, and perhaps you may; I saw Miss Annie Brennan talking to Miss Lenny about you, and as you helped to do the work."

"It would be very kind of them: but if I have a day to spare I would rather stay at home."

Miss Turkinton had always thought her low, she was now sure of it; and sneered her opinion.

Gertrude had seen enough of the romping, and dancing, and feasting, at these parties to desire to avoid them; and she craved for a little conversation with her books; and yes, poor woman has such a weak nature,

to ponder a little on former dreams, and call up the images of the past. It was a weakness; and when she had gratified it, and felt so wretchedly sad, and no Mrs. Doherty to protect her, nor true hearted Tudor to divert, and counsel her, she was conscious that it was; and forbade herself the indulgence for the future: saying, quite resolutely, “No, I will not think of them again. I am alone now, quite alone! I must remember this:” but the idea failed to be inspiring: it set her crying—she seemed forsaken. “It was hard: very hard.” She sobbed; “but it was quite right of Mr. Tudor to go away and not see after her. Why should he? she could not wish it; and what other friends had she?—No, no, it was quite right; he was certainly right—only she was so weak not to be quite contented,”—and she bent over the old German Bible. “It is good always to wait on the Lord.”

In a little while Gertrude had become pretty well acquainted with Miss Lenny's most frequent callers; among these was Miss Watchorn, and although Miss Turkinton might despise her little commissions, she found in Gertrude a ready and obliging assistant; and she soon became interested in her, and called occasionally for the purpose of carrying her away from needles and threads, for a walk in the neighbourhood.

Perhaps the contrast they presented might have placed the young girl under Miss Watchorn's protective friendship; and served to cement their kindly feelings for each other. The one was rather small; and the Saxon origin visible in the blue eye and fair hair; the other very tall, with dark hair, and brows extending in an unbroken line across her face—these were the natural features, which varied their appearance: but how much wider than the difference of Saxon and Norman, had life set those countenances apart. The one yet timidly looking forth to the unknown future, confiding, hoping all things. The other had learnt all those bitter lessons which are included in a knowledge of the world; therefore her friendships were fewer, her hopes less sanguine: she was used to disappointments; but she was not misanthropical—not at all—life had not been all a Sahara, dry, and cheerless; it had had its oases; and there was a fresh spring gushing forth in the heart still.

Gertrude's kindly feelings were awakened by the lonely lot of Miss Watchorn; the contemptuous term of “an old maid,” which the young and thoughtless are so ready to affix, had long settled on her; but Gertrude learnt to look beneath the crust of peculiarities, and perhaps little failings which she displayed; and she found a kind heart, whose pulse beat full and quick, at the touch of kindness. Who knows the tale of disappointed hopes, and buried affections, that may lie hid in the bosom of that class, for whom no partner of life's way, hurries from his daily toil to seek his happiness at home; for whom there is no music of youthful voice and laughter?

“Could we not find some nice retired road?” enquired Gertrude, as she tied her bonnet strings, preparatory to starting on one of their little rambles.

“Why my dear, all our bush roads are very retired, very much so; but we will call at some of the farm-houses.”

“I did not mean the road would be too lonely,” returned Gertrude, quickly.

“You like solitude: but the country people are very hospitable; we shall get a cup of nice tea, with rich sweet cream in it—and soon it will do you good—for you are not strong, you must remember; and indeed young people,—”

A prudential lecture would have followed; but Gertrude was ready to start, and their time being limited, talking could not be permitted to delay their progress.

The idea of a nice quiet walk, was quickly dispelled, for their solitude only extended over the distances intervening between the farm-houses.

Miss Watchorn knew all the dwellers in them, and what with Mrs. Robinson's toothache, Nelly's burnt hand, and the enlarging of this circle, and the lessening of that, there was a reason found why each should receive a call of enquiry, or congratulation, or condolence, and at each place Gertrude was introduced, and had a round of questions to answer: the cups of green tea were indeed becoming alarming—so many good wives, who would not be satisfied without seeing the huge tea-cups, covered with flowers, that would have puzzled Linnaeus to name, emptied—loaves baked under inverted iron-pots, rather retentive of the flavour, or at least odour, of yesterday's cabbage; and “damper” baked without any cover, among the ashes, were sights which alarmed her.

“Is it not time we returned?” she suggested.

“No at all—I must go as far as Mrs. Collins's, they have taken a piece of land on a clearing lease. It will be a new sight to you, perhaps.”

“Yes, there were no tenants at Murrumbowrie. I did hear of clearing leases, but I do not understand them.”

Miss Watchorn began to explain, and a very faint pathway being indicated as leading to their destination, they started on their way—for a little while there were rough fences at times in sight, but bye and bye they were passed, and their path was extremely solitary. Gertrude was already weary, and unable to forget that the same ground had to be gone over again in returning, but Miss Watchorn stepped along with unabated strength, amusing her companion with tales of persons who had lost their way, and piling up a sort of hecatomb of disasters, to beguile the attention of her young friend. The sombre grey stemmed trees appeared as if they had stood just so, no younger, for ages; so dull and graceless; and the

occasional mingling of small trees, of scrub; what a weary tale it told of toil, before the corn could rustle there! The faint track was becoming yet fainter, and threatened to desert them altogether, when the jingling of a bell attached to the neck of a cow reassured them.

“We are just there now,” said Miss Watchorn triumphantly.

Gertrude “hoped so,” in rather a weary tone.

Then there were the strokes of an axe, and presently the settler's camp, and a rude little shed erected round a chimney of bark and logs. A neat little woman with a smiling face, and hands stained to a colour approaching the negro tint, which she explained was with helping her “Master” “burn off,” came forward to welcome them, and find a box, or two in the tent for seats.

“We have been here four weeks come Saturday” she said in reply to a question from Miss Watchorn.

“Will it be long before your cottage is built?” enquired Gertrude, looking up at the canvas roof above them.

“Not for some months. We are clearing a bit of ground down there, for corn and potatoes; and then it must be fenced, because of the cows.”

“You have much work to do.”

“Dear heart, work! we are always working, from sunrise to sunset. My little Katie she says sometimes, ‘I think mother no one ever worked so hard as us’—My master he's burning off now, where you see the fires, and the boys are helping him: we were all there, but Katie and I came up to put the kettle on.”

Katie, a nice steady, little girl, in a blue pinafore, was visible every now and then, running in and out of the hut, with her arms full of lightwood, or bearing a tin can of water from the creek near by.

The domestic scene with its inhabitants might have furnished materials for a sketch of Morland's happy family—Hens guarded their downy broods in the camp; and the old grey cat napped upon the patchwork quilt; dogs strolled in and out; and pigs peered with inquisitive grunt into the canvas dwelling; the parrot in a rough wooden cage was hung from a tree near—and the younger children came trooping in to fill up the picture; and among the furniture the Flutina had not been forgotten.

While the good wife chatted with her visitors, Katie had boiled the kettle, and the cordial of the bushman's heart in all fatigues and cares, the cup of tea, made its appearance; and the chests piled up to form a table were spread with refreshments.

The shadows were lengthening, and the light streaming between the trunks of the trees assumed that vivid golden hue which betokens the approach of sunset.

Reminded of the long walk before her, Gertrude once more assayed another effort in the eating and drinking department.

The picture which presents itself to the eye of the uninitiated, of a farm life, is very frequently little else than a sort of Magic Lanthorn, in which No. 1 represents a rustic whistling at the plough, No. 2. the golden corn falling before the sickle, No. 3 merry maids romping in a hayfield with forks and rakes in their hands, and so on, through harvest homes, and other good things: but it is when one comes face to face with a high thick forest of standing trees, which have to disappear before the first idea of the Magic Lanthorn can be realized, that the actual life of the farm presents itself.

Gertrude fell into such a train of thought as they returned, for they had deviated from the path by which they came, and by way of making a short cut, added considerably to the difficulties of their journey; here they entered an area dotted with wood piled up, and sending forth columns of smoke, and showers of sparks, and ruddy flames shooting up among them; anon they were entangled in a labyrinth of logs lying near, and limbless as they had been left after their branches had been lopped to burn.

“Shall we go back?” enquired Gertrude.

“Oh no, not at all—a little jumping will extricate us.”

A little jumping was tried accordingly. The forest now prostrate had been very thick, and the flames which had passed over it had done no more than blacken the timber, much to the discomfort of the females, when a male voice calling “I say misses, you're in a mess there, I expect,” agreeably startled them.

“Rather so,” responded Miss Watchorn, struggling with a long black branch of a bramble; and Gertrude perched upon a great log looked round for the owner of the voice: he presently made his appearance, with an axe and a grubbing hoe swung over his shoulders.

“Where are you going?” he enquired approaching. Miss Watchorn explained.

“Ha, ha, you be making short work on it; and the young woman there looks like grief on a monument, a looking arter patience.”

Gertrude laughed at the transposed position of the quotation, as well as her position, and stepped down wondering who the quoter from the poets might be.

“Just you come round this ere way misses, it's about the shortest way you can take now.”

Following their guide they presently emerged upon the yet unbroken bush, and soon found themselves at a rough wooden building, with a few fields beyond it. They had fallen in with one of the decent class of small farmers; there were sundry substantial evidences of prosperity about the

dwelling; and a neat Whitechapel cart under the shed, told that the wife and daughters were a little “upish” in their notions. The girls were engaged in the milking yard at that hour, from whence a fine young man was summoned. A cordial offer to harness the old brown pony to the cart, was thankfully accepted, and the weary ramblers started anew.

“We must'nt undertake such a walk again, Miss Gonthier, you seem half dead with fatigue; and I am a little tired myself.”

Gertrude smiled.

“It's awkward walking through the bush,” remarked their charioteer.

“We have been about a mile and a half beyond this to Mrs. Collins's new farm.”

“All the way from town *there?*” ejaculated the young man with very natural surprise.

“We are famous walkers.”

He looked at the white face of the young girl as if he thought she had had too much of walking for that time: but being like most bush reared youths, shy in the presence of strange ladies, relapsed into silence.

Miss Watchorn did the talking for all three, with unabated vigour.

The road was rough and hilly, and from the elevations they enjoyed many a fine view, tinted by the last rays of the sun; and the glowing flood which the clouds, gathered in refractive masses above, cast over the whole landscape, would have made the most sterile scene lovely, even without the fine outlines of the blue mountains, which closed in the view: but the brilliant sheen of the west had given place to a sombre grey, before they alighted at Miss Lenny's door.

Chapter XXIII.

To meet, to part;
The welcome, the farewell;
Behold the sum of life!

BJERREGAARD.

He left his home, around whose humble hearth
His parents, kindred, all he valued, smiled—
Friends who had known and lov'd him from his birth
And who still lov'd him as a favourite child.

* * * * *

And he is gone! with ardent steps he prest
Across the hills—

M. R.

MANY have written upon the emotions which are awakened on revisiting the scenes familiar from childhood, and as Edward Tudor journeyed on towards the home where many a day of youthful happiness had been passed, he certainly indulged in some similar feelings; even the old dead tree with a crow solemnly cawing in its blanched branches that stood sentinel by the sliprails which admitted him to the paternal acres, was hailed as an old friend; yet he was not returning like a school boy at Christmas: but the lines of the face expressed an almost gloomy gravity, the manner was quite enough to seem tinctured by sternness and reserve— he proceeded allowing his horse to walk leisurely along the road, till he saw two figures seated on a fallen tree some little way before him; and then a few moments sufficed to place him by their side.

“We have been here a couple of hours Edward,” said the youngest of the girls, after the first affectionate greeting: “but, you were coming so slowly, no wonder you are so late.”

“I am sorry Fanny you should have been kept waiting. What shall I do now, having but two arms, and the horse to lead.”

“I will lead him, and then we can walk one on each side of you.”

Tudor smiled, but arranged the bridle in such a manner that he could lead his horse and have his arms at liberty.

They proceeded talking cheerfully, yet they felt that their brother was

altered, he was no longer what he had been, yet he was kinder than ever; and as he had written and informed them of the events which determined him to return, they readily attributed it to the melancholy end of Mrs. Doherty; to whom he was much attached. Near the house they were joined by Mrs. Tudor and her younger son, and the family group was complete.

Late in the evening when the others had retired, Mrs. Tudor seated herself by the side of her eldest born, and entered into conversation with him, on the subject which naturally occupied her attention.

“And your connexion with Murrumbowie has terminated,” she said—

“Quite.”

“My son you know how we have missed you! how often I have wished you were among us—we have needed your advice often.”

He smiled gravely. “But Kenneth is a fine fellow, taller indeed than I am; and manly too.”

“True Edward: but under your guidance he would be much better. He wants it I fear.”

“Fear nothing on his account.”

“But you will make this your home now—you will remain.”

“For a short time, as a visitor: but not for long—it would not be right. I am not needed here; and to take the rule out of Kenneth's hands, and assume the mastery over him, whose toil and care has made this place what it is, would be not only unjust, but would lead to his desiring to leave home. I have an idea of taking a place which has been offered me on very advantageous terms, on the Hunter: but I will tell you all about it to-morrow.”—

The mother reclined her head on his shoulder, “You are right Edward—but I would almost wish you were less sternly just. Your sisters will be disappointed”—she looked up with eyes in which approbation and regret were mingled.

The answering smile was full of meaning, but the features across which it played, lost none of the character she had attributed to him.

The slender muscular form, the well defined features, and the massive square brow, were a natural organization, which without the smile answered her—she almost shuddered at the strength of purpose it implied; and yet how tenderly his arm lay round her shoulders.

“What were the reasons which gave you uneasiness about Kenneth mother?” he enquired.

“None with defined outlines, Edward: but he wants your strength of purpose—though I could just now wish you had less of it.”

“Responsibility will give that—he will learn to respect himself; to feel that he has a character and a position to support, or I should say he has

learnt this already; but he has still to work it out.—Where is the book I sent him last Christmas?”

He crossed the room, and searched the shelves, “Not much read I see,” he said smiling, as he turned to a passage and read ‘The principal feeling is that of your own, feebleness; ever, as the English Milton says, to be weak is the true misery. And yet of your strength there is and can be no clear feeling, save by what you have prospered in, by what you have done between vague wavering capability and fixed indubitable performance, what a difference! A certain inarticulate self-consciousness dwells dimly in us; which only our works can render articulate and decisively discernible. Our works are the mirror wherein the spirit first sees its natural lineaments. Hence, too, the folly of that impossible precept, *Know thyself*, till it be translated into this partially possible one, *Know what thou canst work at.*’

Replacing the volume, he said “Mother I have observed Kenneth's character closely and I think you may dismiss all anxiety on his account, but shall I confess dear mother that of late, that is during this last year, or so, I have had many anxious thoughts for you, and your other children”—he was seated beside her, with her hand held in his.

“For me, my son?”

“I have wished to write to you on this subject, but could not—I have felt that I must speak with you.”

Their eyes met, the mother's swimming in tears: “Your letters have told us all—at first we wondered; but not now. ‘Thy God shall be my God, and thy people, my people.’ ”

Purer, for more heavenly than any other emotion is the mingling of Christian sympathies; and the mother and son felt bound to each other from this moment, by a tie which death itself should not break.

A long conversation followed; and when they parted the night was waning towards morning.

“Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it”—was the prayer which closed a discussion of future plans.

Mrs. Tudor from the time she lost her husband, had looked up to her elder son, and submitted all her movements to his opinion; Kenneth's were the hands, and Tudor's the head; but during the last two years, the latter had rather suggested to the former, and made him act, though guided by himself. Kenneth did not know how indebted he was to his brother, as he led him round the farm before sunrise next morning, commenting on his improvements; he never for a moment felt that the mainspring of those improvements was by his side.

Kenneth was one of those very tall native youths often met with in the

country,—slender as a wattle sapling in a scrub—with long dark hair hanging round his head, from under a cabbage tree hat, and given to the society of a pipe—a capital horseman—the very perfection at whip cracking—and as industrious as any one could desire.

The two young men came in glowing and refreshed from a walk of some distance, and received an affectionate welcome from the ladies of the family.

“What do you think of the farm Edward?”

“I am quite pleased. Ken has been showing me the reaping machine. I had intended to have one out from home, for Murrumbowrie; we had been talking of it sometime, and were only deterred by our fields being so hilly.”

“Are you not glad to be on the *Lepin* as old Simon calls it?” enquired his eldest sister, handing him a cup of tea.

“Very, shall we have out the boat? The water is rather low, but we do not mind a few snags and delays, do we?”

“Oh no, Kenneth, can you not borrow Mr. Branson's boat, and ask the girls to come, and we will have a Picnic”—a pleasant discussion ensued.

Tudor had not handled an oar for a considerable time, and when the boats were finally launched, took a lesson from Fanny; but a few efforts brought him into the measured stroke so essential to pleasant progress in the water.

The clear sparkling waters of the Nepean flowed over their sandy bottom in pellucid tranquillity, only too shallow for aquatic convenience—now the boats were lighted up by the sun's rays, which danced like a fairy crew upon the ripples which their oars made—now they shot beneath the shadows of the light swamp oaks, sighing and murmuring as the wind swept through their wiry foliage—or a cluster of willow trees, vividly green, and mingled with the juniper and drift lodged in their branches from former floods; above on the sandy banks were fields, and at times a farmhouse or a barn reared its homely form; and children ran along the banks to watch the progress of the voyagers—it was slow indeed, and often in this style.

“What's the matter Edward?” called Kenneth to the boatman in advance.

“Only a log across the stream.”

“Can you pull the boat over?”

“I believe so.”

The oars were here delivered to Fanny, and Tudor stepped out on to the submerged tree, and by dint of vigorous exertions surmounted the obstruction. Both boats being afloat again the oars came into play, and a song awoke the echoes, and startled the wood demons in their green wood retreats, suddenly terminated by an announcement from Kenneth, that he was aground; presently, however, the keel ceased to scrape on the sand

bank, and floated in deep water.

By the time a green point shaded by trees was reached, the contents of the provision basket had risen in value, and Mrs. Tudor's meal was at a premium.

The spot was an old favourite retreat, where many a sandwich had been eaten, and many a song sung, and merry laugh gone round in other days of picnicing; and the party assembled there appeared to be determined to enjoy the thing with unabated zest.

No need for any one to complain that Edward Tudor was gloomy; and none but Annie as she sat by his side, looking into those speaking eyes, read that there was an aching heart buried beneath the smile, caged by an iron will. The past would not hamper the future; he would be the same as formerly: none but "One whose eye penetrates all secrets" would suspect the truth.

Such had been the resolve, and Annie felt rather than saw that resolve had taken the place of spontaneous cheerfulness.

Fanny was whispering an account of the recent events to the Misses Branson when Kenneth catching the words, "Mrs. Doherty" enquired abruptly.

"Edward what become of the young girl Mrs. Doherty had housekeeping for her?"

"She is in Sydney," returned he quickly.

"What will she do?" sympathetically asked Fanny.

"She left before I returned Fanny, I therefore did not see her."

The girls would have asked a great many more questions, but Tudor remembered it was getting late and there would be no moon.

"We must not venture among the sunken trees at night," he remarked rising.

In a few moments they were again prepared to start.

The difficulties which had assailed their downward course were again to be combated, and evening was rapidly drawing near.

The overflowing waters in times of flood streaming over the banks and across places where the trees had been fallen, and not burnt off, sweep away vast numbers, and lodge them in the bed of the stream when the force of the current has abated: and even the little boats in which our voyagers were seated frequently became entangled. The party were returning in comparative silence, rather applying themselves to a task than enjoying their mishaps.

"Ken" called Tudor, "here is a reach of clear water, let us strike out."

"It's too shallow, better go on slowly."

"We did not ground in passing over this in the morning—come I will

race you.”

Strong arms pulled the oars; the little crafts flew forward a few lengths, when the clear water was confined to such a narrow passage that Kenneth slackened, to allow his brother to take the lead. Faster and faster the little boat sped on, the girls looked back, laughing and waving a farewell.

“Take care Edward, take care!” cried Kenneth, “I know the water better.”

Ere his warning voice reached them, the boat struck on a sunken tree, now concealed in the shades of sunset—recoiled—paused for a moment—and sunk.

A piercing cry of horror rent the air. The other boat was some distance behind, and the water deep where they had sunk.

Bewildered with affright Fanny twined her arms round her brother, literally drowning him. He tried to hang to a branch of the tree—he was in acute pain—his brain reeling, and the half uttered “Fanny leave go, I can save you,” had not power to calm her.

When consciousness returned he was stretched on the bank, his companions bending over him with alarm depicted on every countenance.

There were noises ringing in his ears, and a confused idea that his sisters, dripping with their recent bath, were chafing his hands and brow; and beyond, were other faces, and other voices talking eagerly. Then there were lights dancing round; and he was lifted up and placed on a bundle of straw in a cart; and still the pitying tones were whispering round him.

This was the commencement of a severe illness. The jagged branches of the tree had lacerated his arm and side, and a long and weary time of suffering set in.

“This is the hardest work I have ever done Mother; to lie still here.”

“You will soon be well now my son.”

“Yes.” This was about a fortnight after the picnic. “Did Kenneth see about the farm on the Hunter, do you know?”

“He did; it is yours. Are you impatient to leave us?” There was a little gentle reproof in the tone.

“Not to leave you, but to be doing something. I am so accustomed to activity you know, you must pardon my impatience dear mother.”

“Pardon! You have been the best of invalids.” Tudor felt otherwise, the discipline of a sick bed was as he had said, the most opposed to his previous habits, and his disposition; but he had not lain as a chained rebel, but endeavoured to extract from the bitter draught, the tonic, which faith assures us, is mingled with every cup our Heavenly Father places in our hands.

“Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?”

“So of old we read, ‘and Jesus stood on the shore, and they knew not that it was Jesus.’ ”

How often is it so: how many a disciple struggling under some burden, knows not that it is Jesus, sees not the hand behind, only the thunderbolt rolling on, as if to smite him to the earth. Yet He is there, standing on the shore, nigh to the sufferer, ready to say to the troubled waves, “Peace, be still.”

And His first word of old to that sorrowing boat's crew, was “*Children.*”

When the storm spreads across the sky, we see only the black clouds, yet the clear ether lightened by the unsullied sun is behind; and by and by will be revealed to us again. Let us trust then in every dark hour. Assuredly the cloud will disperse, and the sun be there.

Another fortnight, and Tudor bade adieu to River-side Farm. For awhile he seemed to have stepped aside from the busy arena of life; but the rest was over, and he felt with satisfaction, that difficulties, increased by that pause, awaited him at his distant dwelling; and that he had to bring to the encounter, all his energy.

“So much the better.”

Tudor had ridden many miles in solitude, and a turn bringing him in sight of an equestrian, he quickened his pace, and reined up beside him, with a polite “good day.”

“Good day, glad of your company returned the other.” A very small man, with a rough mass of nearly white hair, shading the lower part of his face. The dusty dress, unblackened boots, and leather saddlebags betokened the traveller; the old pony on which he rode appeared as if he had taken a comprehensive view of life, and set it down as lighter than vanity, his half shut eyes, drooping head, and ears hanging languidly, said as plainly as possible, that he was weary; and the erect tanned coat might have classed him with the asinine family.

Constraint between two travellers, on a solitary bush road, is out of the question; and the enquiry, if they were going in the same direction, led to an explanation of where that direction might be.

The stranger was inquisitively desirous of learning what was the business of the young man, but anxiously avoided any reference to his own concerns.

“Have you seen a newspaper lately,” enquired Tudor, perceiving his feelings, and leading the conversation into another channel.

“Yes, did you read the news from the diggings?” His little eyes sparkled, and he grew excited directly.

“No, I did not. I have not seen the papers for some days; are they doing well?”

“Wonders, wonders! I tell you young man the time will come when they will quarry gold—blast it with powder, like granite.”

“Think so,” smiling—

“Sure of it, sure of it—I've been to all the diggings.”

“Indeed! you have gained experience then. Are you intending to return to any of the fields again?”

“No! I am prospecting privately.”

He looked so very mysterious, that it provoked a slight smile on his companion's countenance. He was evidently a monomaniac, who in the feverish race for wealth, had unhinged reason. Many a wild tale had he to tell; and dark revelation to make, of scenes he had participated in, or witnessed; and his quaint eccentric manners and language caught, and held captive the attention of his companion: so they journeyed on, and before the stage was completed, the “prospector” had made up his mind to bend his steps in the same direction as his companion.

“As well there as anywhere,” he remarked.

“Certainly—”

“Luck you know, it's all luck.”

“Do you think there is no higher rule than chance?” The question was put quietly, and unobtrusively.

The old man looked restless, and urged his Rosinante into a canter.

“Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” The words struck home to the heart of his companion, as he quickened his pace to keep up with him.

Heavy clouds were rising majestically from behind the neighbouring range of mountains, and thunder rumbled, and an occasional flash of lightning betokened the coming storm. The scene was at once grand and awful; the reverberating among the ranges, of the peals of thunder—then the perfect silence—the hush of expectant nature, as if she said with the poet—

“The tempest burst above;
God whispers in the thunders: hear
The terrors of His love.”

E. ELLIOTT.

darkness was closing rapidly round.

“Have you travelled this road before,” enquired the prospector?

“No, I believe we must stop short of the stage I had proposed making. There is a tavern somewhere about here.”

Tudor's horse was becoming restive, alarmed by the lightning; but it was

mounted by one not easily intimidated, and a skilful hand held the bridle.

After a while a light in the distance greeted them; and giving the rein to their horses, they galloped forward, scattering the mud and water as they went, for the rain was descending in torrents.

Grateful as shelter was upon such a night, the roadside tavern held out little promise of comfort to the new-comers. They were shewn into a room at the back of the bar, where were several persons disposed on chairs and colonial sofas before the fire, smoking and drinking, and a pack of excessively greasy cards was engrossing considerable interest.

The room was low, with walls painted in the upper part dark red, the lower part blue, with a black band marking the division of the two colours. A smoking chimney had considerably tarnished the beauties of the colouring, and turned the ceiling from white to grey; indeed such a heavy cloud of smoke was then rolling round the room, that it was problematical if there were a ceiling at all.

The chairs, and the earthenware which was spread on the table, were equally dilapidated, and suggestive of warfare.

Tudor glanced round upon the room and its occupants; the men round the fire had turned to take a survey of the travellers, with one exception, and something in that tall figure bending towards the fire struck him, and elicited a second and more attentive gaze, but the features were hidden by his posture.

Although the bacon was rancid—the tea made in a tin teapot, without milk, and the sugar nearly black, the travellers congratulated themselves upon the shelter and warmth of the room; as the wind drove the rain against the window, and shook the ill-fitting casement: one of the card players had drawn his chair near the table, and entered into conversation.

“A bad night,” elicited some further remarks on the weather; and then he bade Sara, the landlord's daughter who was in waiting, to bring in certain glasses of rum.

“Take a drop sir, to keep out the cold,” was the invitation.

Tudor politely declined, and the gold-seeker proving more sociably inclined, the steaming glasses added their own peculiar odour to the already rather overpowering mixture.

The man was a farmer, and the prices of grain, and the state of the crops were duly noticed, with probable rises, or falls, in the current rates, and the influences of foreign importations gravely canvassed.

Tudor had forgotten the stooping figure by the fire, for the subjects under discussion were sufficiently interesting to him; when a voice uttering a few hasty words of dissent respecting some movement of one of the card players, again aroused that feeling which had struck him before.

He arose, and walking up to the fire-place, encountered Charles Inkersole.

“Why Mr. Tudor, what has brought you here? What do you want?” exclaimed Charley starting to his feet.

“Merely a shelter from the storm, Mr. Inkersole. I did not anticipate meeting you here, in a district so remote from your home.”

The other eyed him narrowly, for a moment; and then sat down again. The flush, borrowed probably from the glasses, now empty beside him, and which had forsaken his cheek, on first seeing Tudor, returned.

“I might say the same, what are you looking for now?”

The insinuation in the latter words, rather roused his companion, but a cold look was the only reply. “I am travelling a bit—seeing a little of the country,” pursued Charley.

And where was Gertrude! The question passed through Tudor's mind, but did not escape his lips—was she even then in some apartment in the Tavern, or was she alone on the distant run, in the wild regions of the Abercrombie, the companion of stockmen's wives. Almost a groan of anguish escaped him—such an overwhelming pity for her, took possession of him.

Charley too was altered for the worse; he had lost that air of bush dandyism, which he had formerly; and a disordered and reckless air had supplanted it. The merry eye, the ruddy cheek, the frequent light laugh, all were changed.

Poor Gertrude! and he could not help her. Once again he felt that he was powerless, that the boasted strength of humanity is as nothing, that man “is crushed before the moth.” So a cry to heaven welled up for help, that she might be kept unspotted from the world, surrounded by such dangers—he turned away.

“Miss Sara, oblige me by a lantern, I must go to the stable and see to my horse.”

“It's well taken care of: yours and the other gentleman's.”

“I shall proceed.”

“To-night! Why Sir? The rain's teeming down, you could'nt travel such a night.”

The girl, a fine young Jewess, like many of her race, possessed beautiful dark almond shaped eyes, and glossy hair, shading handsome features, turned a wondering look upon the erect determined form before her, looking as composed as if it were a balmy summer's day, instead of a tempestuous night.

The landlord pressed forward, eagerly dissuasive in his reasoning, and his anxiety for the gentleman's comfort: and the farmer and the gold-seeker

joined.

“I am well provided with water-proof wrappers, and my horse is fresh and strong. If you desire it Mr. Rigden, I will wait at the end of my stage for you. The storm is abating—the wind has changed.” He had detected the rattling of the opposite window-shutters, and bushman-like, was well versed in matters connected with the weather.

The old man insisted on accompanying him, and shortly afterwards they were on their way; the wind driving the black masses of clouds across the sky, and occasionally permitting a brief gleam of a watery azure to lighten their way—but the cold wind was agreeable to the feverish brows, and the raging of the elements, the storm within was subdued, and relieved of the profane conversation, the clamour and laughter of the card-players, and stupifying scents, he applied the directing hand of Christian faith upon the tumultuous throng within: but not less keen was his poignant sympathy for the young Emigrant.

A remark of Charley's had informed him that he was travelling alone: so he supposed she was at the station.

They rode quickly on notwithstanding the darkness of the night, that indeed as the clouds dispersed, was lessened and the moon beams glistened faintly on the little streams dashing down the mountain sides, and across the road, gurgling and boiling in the ruts, and making mud of what was so lately dry dust.

It was a cheerless night to be abroad, and the Inn to which they were travelling was some miles in advance. Eber Rigden jogged along in silence, his old pony grinding the bit with a bitter misanthropical sound; as for Tudor his thoughts had fallen into the train of Orona's and if not in those words he was in spirit repeating.

“ ‘Dear God’ she cried, and must we see
All blissful things depart from *us*, or ere we go to *THEE*?”

After they had travelled a mile or so in silence, the Gold-seeker suddenly remarked “I have seen them before.”

“Who?”

“The man you spoke to, Charles Inkersole, and the other who was standing beside him.”

“Have you, where?”

“At the Abercrombie, I was prospecting there, and I stayed at their hut for several nights.”

“At whose hut, the Inkersoles'?”

“Yes. But that man was there; he was a horse dealer: do you see I suspected that dealer, he being round the diggings. I have seen him before, always trucking and dealing in horses.”

The cold wind swept past them, the pony hung his head lower, and ground the bit savagely. Tudor's horse plunged a little; when they were quietly proceeding, he inquired of what he suspected the man.

“Of horse stealing—stray horses round the diggings, you know young man.”

“Very likely”—the words

‘And must we see
All blissful things depart from *us*, or ere we go
TO THEE.’

appeared sighing in the wind.

The mild little face, and golden hair of Gertrude, were peering out beside Charley and the dealer: with the cheerless slab walls of hut, and the bark smoke blackened roof, completing the picture. Tudor drove it from his mind. The jealous eye which had feared the contaminating society of old Sarah, could not dwell on this—it was the same spirit, one with which for the future he might remember her—the protecting kindness of the strong for the weak—the yearning of the heart for the good, and the growth in holiness for those around it.

Chapter XXIV.

“The world receded from her rising view,
When heaven approach'd as earthly things withdrew;
Not strange before, for in the days of love,
Joy, hope and pleasure, she had thoughts above.
Pious when most of worldly prospects fond,
When they best pleased her, she could look beyond.”

GERTRUDE'S acquaintance with the family to whom her rambles with Miss Watchorn had introduced her, was destined not to terminate there.

Some large orders had kept Miss Lenny and her assistants occupied during each succeeding day, and till late in the night; and when the work was completed, and leisure hours returned, the dress maker kindly suggested that Gertrude should take a change, and visit some of the country customers. Accordingly she dwelt upon the young girl's pale cheek in the presence of Mrs. Wedlake, the farmer's wife.

“I am getting anxious about her,” she said with truth—“she is a delicate looking girl, and for the last ten days we have been so busy, and she will not spare herself.”

“Let her come out with me Miss Lenny, exercise as I say, is the best medicine.”

“You are very good. It is just what she wants.”

“I have the cart in near.”

Gertrude was really glad of the freedom from small rooms, littered with dresses and other articles of apparel, in every state of progress, and lighted by tallow candles which assumed to her weary eyes great misty flames, encircled by halos.

Mrs. Wedlake drove her own vehicle, and Gertrude's timid glance from the fat hand holding the reins, to the horse, reassured her that her hostess was no novice—a manly chirrup, and intimation to “get along,” put them in motion.

Mrs. Wedlake was a round little woman with a face perfectly lubricated with complacency; and she soon informed Gertrude that Mr. Wedlake was very well to do in [the] world; and that her butter and poultry were the best in the market; and her daughters very nice girls; although she as their mother should not say so.

The rude extension to the cottage had not led the visitor to look for refinement within, the room they entered was of that convenient class

which serve for kitchen and sitting room. Above the blazing logs, hung the tea kettle and beneath a set of shelves containing a rather large assortment of earthenware, some cooking utensils shewed their homely proportions.

The opposite wall was adorned with a few shelves of books, and several colored prints; the Crucifixion, Moses in the bulrushes, the martyrdom of Stephen, and an English fox hunting scene, all equally brilliant in coloring and style.

Some rather yellow anti-macassars were displayed in various parts of the room; and a chest of drawers covered with a crochet cover glittered with glass and grotesque specimens of shepherdesses, and dogs in china.

The welcome was cordial from all. Mr. Wedlake said "it was very *ap-
re-
po* to the purpose," kindly explaining to his ignorant auditory his foreign words, "that Mrs. Wedlake should go up to Miss Lenny's, Miss Gonthier."

"I am sure sir, I am very much obliged to you for this, and your former kindness."

"No need. We should help each other in all contingencies, as I say."

"You helped us most famously in our contingency, for I am sure, I do not know how I should have walked home" returned she smiling cheerfully, "but who is this?"

She had just noticed a little delicate child standing near her, and with a pair of most expressive eyes earnestly searching her face.

"That's my youngest Miss Gonthier."

Gertrude held out her hand. "Will you come and make friends with me?" she enquired.

The kind voice was unheard, the child was deaf and dumb, but she saw the expression of the face, and reading, as children do, the character of those around, as if by a heaven inspired power, which leads them to recognize at once the loving and the kindly, the child accepted the invitation.

"I do declare" ejaculated the comely little woman, "just look at that—there's Mary in Miss Gonthier's arms."

Gertrude looked up smiling, she was twisting a thread round her fingers to make a cat's cradle; and already had taken a place in the child's heart.

Whenever Gertrude raised her eyes during the evening, it was to encounter the keen glance of the afflicted girl's eyes rivetted on her—something wonderful was there in the expression of that look—a language of great intelligence; silently communing—not with outward things, but it seemed with the soul. A look to make the evil tremble, though it was given by a puny child, on whose little form was written in unmistakable characters—death.

What might be the communings which that imprisoned spirit held

through the medium of those wondrous eyes, it was only for imagination to define.

When the family knelt down at the evening prayer and she knelt with them, did she indeed hold converse with the Unseen—and when with entranced faculties she watched the sun retire behind the western mountains, gilding the sky and earth, did she receive impressions of the Great Creator? who could say.

To Gertrude, the little mute was of all the family most interesting—but she soon found occupation in assisting Mrs. Wedlake among her dairy dishes, or in feeding her poultry. By no means despicable was the collection: not to refer to cocks and hens, and ducks and geese, there were guinea and pea fowl, and pigeons; crowing and cackling, and shrieking resounded from the feathered throng, from earliest morning to sunset. Then when the sun was near the horizon, the thin blue veined hand of the mute would be placed in Gertrude's, and yielding to the light command, she would put down the skimmer, or the dish of corn, and follow where she led.

The undulating character of the ground in that district, had diversified Mr. Wedlake's little farm in a manner far more agreeable to the artistic eye, than to the farmer's.

A green knoll rose above the cottage, thinly wooded by large old Eucalypti, grey and rugged, with scanty leaves scattered over the lofty branches; what a prospect rewarded the ascent! for miles spread out the alternating farms and wood; now rising into an eminence, now sinking abruptly into a vale, or widening into a little plain; and beyond all, those ethereal shades of blue mountains—then the fiery kiss of the sun upon the distant horizon, and the lighting up of the before grey cloud, as if to proclaim once more “Peace on earth, and good will towards man.”

So long the child gazed with such an enraptured air, that Gertrude had gently to take her hand, and point to the cottage; a quick drawn breath, the relaxing of the faculties from tension, replied, and they softly descended the brow.

The area of logs with which Gertrude had already made acquaintance, was again to be ignited that evening, and she readily agreed to join the party who were engaged in the work.

The large trees had been sawn asunder in many places, and rolled together into funeral pyres, in which to consume nature's children. The females of the family rendered assistance in setting fire to them.

“What a magnificent illumination” remarked Gertrude, as they paused to watch the result of their labour: the flames were rushing up, making ruddy the black sky, and throwing the surrounding woods into deeper obscurity.

“Will these trees be quite consumed, Mr. Wedlake?”

“Well, I comprehend not Miss Gonthier,” returned that individual, pausing with his arms full of dry branches, which were to assist the kindling of some large logs. “I more than expect that we shall be at this yere work for some nights to come.”

“It looks very grand, much better than it did last time I was here.”

“I mean after awhile, God permitting, to clear that piece.”

Gertrude looked in the direction he was pointing towards.

“When I first took this land, there wasn't an acre, no nor half an acre clear. I did not stick the plough in before some labour, I can tell you.”

“I am sure of that: and when these trees are burnt, what then?”

“What will I do?”

“Yes.”

“Break it up as fast as I can; and my son will fence it round—it will yield a good crop I expect.” Mr. Wedlake moved on, and presently a fiery track marked his progress.

The girls imitated his example, and talking ceased till another rest was requisite.

“La! Miss Gonthier you are quite black with smoke,” exclaimed Johanna Wedlake, approaching her.

“Am I? no matter, it will soon wash off; but here is a large hole burnt in my apron.”

“Oh my! what a pity.”

“Look out, catch him Nipper—Bob catch him” cried young Wedlake. The two dogs set up a cry, and ran madly about and all paused in their labours to enquire the cause of the confusion. “It was a native cat, he was in this ere hollow log; a grey un.”

“There was no end to varmint when we came here first,” remarked his father, turning to Gertrude.

“What has become of it?” she enquired nervously balancing the horrors of being burnt, or worried to death.

Notwithstanding Josiah's orders to “hold him,” the dogs appeared more likely to make a noise, than to do so.

“There were lots of dogs,” pursued Mr. Wedlake.

“Are they gone?”

“Gone, no, I set baits of meat with stricnine on it.”

“What is that?”

“A most mortal, deadly pison; there ant nothing like stricnine.”

“Indeed; but was not it dangerous? your own dogs, or pigs, might have eaten the baits.”

“We secured them first, but we must not spell too long—if you get tired

you see, just go home; don't knock yourself up."

Gertrude promised not to fatigue herself; but her slight little figure was seen at intervals among the work, all the evening; now hidden in the shadow, now emerging into the full brilliant light.

"I say Johanna," remarked Mr. Wedlake to his eldest daughter, "that's a remarkable girl, quiet and tender looking, but something uncommon."

So his helpmate decided, when Gertrude's nimble fingers had been among caps and bonnets; and when the lifted cover of the camp-oven displayed such a very excellent cake, at the precise tint of brown most suitable.

Every evening till the logs were consumed she was ready cheerfully to assist; and though her strength was puny for the toil, the fragile form gliding among the smoke wreaths, was cheering.

The rude shock which had suddenly severed her from protection and love, and thrown her upon her own resources, was of all others the most likely to mature her character.

"When heaven would kindly set us free,
And earth's enchantments end;
It takes the very surest way,
And robs us of a friend."

Gertrude had come to the colony a Christian indeed, in feeling, but in the quiet routine of her village life, if simplicity and patience had been cultivated, many other cardinal virtues were rather in embryo; whilst with a heart just expanding to womanly affections, she fell into the emigrant girl's common error, an attachment which her mature judgment, and strengthened Christian character condemned.

The melancholy scenes which had terminated her residence at Murrumbowrie, had cast a shadow over her, which gratitude and affection forbade her to cast off; whilst she bowed to the hand which ordered her thorny way.

How vast a difference between a morbid indulgence in grief, or stoical contempt of affection, and the feeling submission to Him "whom not having seen, we love."

If, during those busy days, Gertrude's alacrity was earning her golden opinions, the most delightful of all times was the evening, when the labour of the day was closed, with the horse in the stable, or the hoe in the tool shed; then Mr. Wedlake sat himself down to read, and give Gertrude his opinions. Very positive were those opinions, for the farmer was one of the class of self-educated men, who having formed an opinion, never alter it;

and meet all opposition with overwhelming contempt. It was not often he had such an auditor as Gertrude, so he made the most of it, and held forth in a manner that awestruck his better half; for though the worthy woman had a will of her own, she had a great dread of her husband's learning and abilities; and an undefined way of speaking of him, that might have led a stranger to suppose that he was a very Blue Beard, though she never meant such a thing.

In town she used to say, "I must be getting home, for he'll be coming in 'fore things are ready, and you know Mr. Wedlake that would never do." And so at home she used to caution the young people—"Good gracious me if your father only knew that; I durst'nt let father know that for my life," and so on. Now all the while Mr. Wedlake was an excellent man, and no one more truly appreciated him, than did his comely little wife.

"Eddication's a great thing, Miss Gonthier," began Mr. Wedlake on one of these occasions, laying down a book he had been reading.

Gertrude assented—

"I was always for my family getting an eddication, because, I says, it gives them a standing in the world."

"Undoubtedly."

"We're wiser in this generation than last was, and them after us, will be wiser than us."

Gertrude did not feel competent to offer an opinion; besides Mr. Wedlake spoke positively, as if he were personally cognisant of the fact.

"I'll just give you my 'pinion."

Mrs. Wedlake hushed Johanna, who was disposed to hum a tune over her needlework, and cousin Tom like a young rogue as he was, whispered, "hear, hear" in a very under tone.

"I always was for keeping up with the times; so my gals had a year at a boarding school, and learnt the pianny."

Gertrude had seen the piano, it stood in the best room, keeping a few chairs and a table company, as they stood in gloomy state, only broken in upon when the young ladies were musically inclined, or some grand visitor called.

"But my 'pinion is, that learning's nothing without natural sense. A man can't get brains out of a book."

"Certainly not, but he may cultivate and strengthen his mind. Do you not think so?"

"I wouldn't say no Miss Gonthier, but without natural abilities it won't do him much good, won't learning, a man may be rough and rude, but if he's got a mind—"

" 'All is not attractive that's good,' Mr. Wilberforce tells us," returned

Gertrude.

“Certainly, very true, a very good idea, quite my 'pinion, and *apt-repo* to what I was a saying.”

Mr. Wedlake's brother here joined the party; he lived near, and was a frequent visitor. They were two very different men; Luke Wedlake was a careless easy man, who had few opinions beyond his ploughshare, and whose education was strictly rural. Even the political leading article of the newspaper, received scanty attention.

Young Luke was clearly growing up in the same views, and disposed to take the same steps.

A week had been the period fixed for Gertrude's visit, but the family appeared disinclined to part with her, and the entreating eyes of the mute, who gathered from their manner when the subject was discussed, decided her to remain a few days longer.

The freemasonry of kindred spirits united her with the child; it needed no vocal power to communicate the emotions which the lover of nature is inspired with, in her domains—they knew the thrill of sympathy in the tightening fingers, as hand in hand they strolled—in the sudden pause, and the meeting glance— words were superfluous—

“And walking 'mid the fading blooms,
At Summer's midnight shalt thou feel
A softened heart, a will subdued,
A holy sense of gratitude,
An influence from the source of good,
The bitterest griefs to heal”

MRS. HOWITT.

Many a heartache Gertrude lost in a chat with nature.

* * * * *

Unlike the district from which Gertrude had come, instead of the country being divided among large landholders, or leased from government for pasturage, for flocks and herds, almost to the exclusion of the small settler, unless the tenantry, or workmen of the landholders, her present abode was in the midst of small farmers, and a dairying, poultry and pig rearing community, whose land was not counted by the thousand acres, but by the unit. Very busy, hard working folks, living in very huts, with fattening calves, and downy chicks round old hens, incessantly making warlike sallies against dogs, and sly stepping cats; with ducks quacking round the

threshold, and pea fowl mournfully screaming. Yet, from among these and sundry other occupants of the timber dwelling, appeared on high-days and holy-days such round faced, red handed damsels, in flounced dresses, and kid gloves, bursting at the seams, and revealing the afore mentioned hands of honest hue, which were then doing duty in supporting a parasol of rather lively coloured silk; whilst the feet usually disdaining any covering, were genteelly uncomfortable in patent leather—such stout ruddy mothers too, with a weakness for black satin, and artificial flowers; and fathers, upon whom the long tailed dress coat and black hat sat uneasily; and whose hands left free, by the shirt cuff rolled back, wandered uneasily into pockets perfumed by tobacco.

These were the people whose delight it was, upon a marriage, or christening, to collect and have a dance; when the toast to the *ladies* was drunk with great animation, not in champagne, but in rum punch.

There were various degrees of intellect, and class, in the community; and many of those sterling, excellent characters, which no where show to greater advantage than in the cottage; sound sense, and high Christian principles, not unfrequently were united.

But above all these, like luminaries, shone here and there at wide intervals, patrician families. Several of these families patronised Miss Lenny; among these were one family named Markarld; people of wealth and influence, and great arrogance; but as all that they patronised gained a sort of dignity from that patronage, and became, at least in their own eyes, satellites revolving round the centre of their greatness, Miss Lenny was treated with condescending pride, if the anomaly be allowable; and she indemnified herself for present obsequiousness, by detailing all their little faults and failings, to her less haughty customers.

While Miss O'Brien's wedding order was still in hand, Mrs. Markarld of Markarld Park and her step daughters visited the shop; and whilst Miss Turkinton took the young ladies' measure, and Miss Lenny remarked upon the weather to their mama, the pretty face, rather pale and grave now, of Gertrude, caught her attention.

“An apprentice?” she enquired, eyeing the object of her remark.

“No, only a visitor Mrs. Markarld; we are looking out for a place for her; something of an upper place in a gentleman's family.”

Mrs. Markarld made no remark. She was many years younger than Mr. Markarld, a small woman, with a quiet subdued manner, almost approaching to apathy; but who was known to do kind actions, and to be amiable in her own way. She had come to the colony some twelve years previously, and soon afterwards, occupied her present position. The three Miss Markarlds were grown to womanhood now.

“We want a needle woman ma,” said one of the trio in reply to Miss Lenny's information, and she turned to carefully survey the young seamstress.

Strangely enough, Gertrude's thoughts flew back to Mr. Tudor, with a half formed idea, that had he been there, he would have screened her from the painful ordeal. She had a habit of flying to his memory, in times of trial.

Mrs. Markarld did require a needle woman, but was afraid of compromising her dignity, by saying so, or appearing to take an interest in any young woman behind Miss Lenny's counter; and presently departed.

Gertrude's mind, cultured above her position in life, and naturally keenly susceptible of impressions, was open to a thousand joys and woes, springing from apparently trivial sources. She had become almost morbidly sensitive, from the want of sympathy and the incessant little wounds inflicted by ignorance; but now when earth had no spring bloom to her, and her sky lowered above her, she turned more utterly and fully to her God: not withdrawing from the world as a recluse, not frowning ascetically upon its harmless pleasures, but ever trying to be useful, to drop sweets into the bitter cup, wherever it was presented; and what hand is there that at some period has not grasped with trembling hold, the bitter portion, and sipped perhaps unseen the venom which distils through every joy and pleasure, whispering, “This is not thy rest.”

Gertrude was not unrewarded, though compensation had not been sought for, a more genial spirit unknown to themselves sprang up around her. Miss Turkinton said “she was cold, and that she could not make her out,” but she did not despise her. There was too much of the dignity of goodness for that, about her. Miss Lenny valued her, and perhaps she spoke in her praise to Mrs. Markarld, for after awhile came an intimation that she might go down and speak to that lady, on the subject of the situation, and the result was, that Gertrude and her little possessions were transferred to Markarld Park.

The air of lofty patronage extended toward the emigrant girl, shocked her, it placed her in the establishment so thoroughly as the servant, a situation she had never felt she previously occupied. Mrs. Doherty would have taken any allusion of the kind as a personal insult; she was not the woman to pursue such a system. Gertrude had been respected, and had respected herself; but now she was like John Bunyan's pilgrim, descending the valley of humiliation: a hard journey at all times, it needed a careful eye, and many an earnest prayer to heaven, to subdue some rebellious feelings.

Privately, Mrs. Markarld assured her lady friends in the drawing-room,

that Gertrude was quite a treasure. Mrs. Eddy, one of her visitors, whispered to her daughter that all the Markarld's people were treasures at first, but quite the reverse when they left them; and aloud congratulated her friend on the possession of such a rarity; and the ladies descanted on the merits, and demerits of their servants, till the gentlemen from the dining-room joined them.

Gertrude in the little room, where she sat and sewed, was trying to work out a double dress, busily plying her needle, and striving to clothe her heart with the sentiment which Quarles quaintly, but happily, expresses thus. "If thou desire happiness, desire not to be rich; he is rich, not who possesses much, but he that covets no more; and he is poor, not that enjoys little, but wants too much: the contented mind wants nothing that it hath not, the covetous mind wants, not only what it hath not, but likewise what it hath." She was making the best of existing circumstances; but the heart craved for affection and companionship.

Miss Watchorn had pressed Gertrude to visit her as soon as possible, but it was some little time before a leisure hour presented itself, and she then gladly seized it, to fulfil her promise. She had not previously called at Miss Watchorn's cottage, for that lady had come to Miss Lenny's to take her for those long rambles which she was so addicted to.

A very minute garden enclosed by white palings, spread before the door; Gertrude's little gloved hand was on the wicket, when an agitated movement of the window drapery called her attention, and Miss Watchorn's eyes were visible above the leno, and below the blind; and presently she appeared, and warmly welcomed her dear friend.

The little sitting room bore evidences of its occupant's skill, in those thousand little arts which throw the mantle of beauty over homeliness. Her visitor was in a mood to see every thing in "rose colour", and for a little while was occupied in admiring d'oyleys and mats, and jars covered with gilt paper, and china, &c.. Then Miss Watchorn entered into her present position, and was rather minute in her enquiries; very kind and very curious, it took a long while to exhaust this subject. Just then Miss Watchorn's nephew, Mr. Ben entered, and was formally introduced, although his aunt felt some cold shivers, lest the known susceptibility of the youth should be endangered.

Mr. Ben was employed in some useful trade, but had a poetic genius, and a habit of writing on fly-leaves, and margins of his friend's books, in a style in which the words "love" and "dove," "bleeding heart" and "bliss impart" took prominent places. On this account, the young gentleman was looked shyly upon by persons who did not consider his verses an embellishment to their library.

Then there was the Dress-maker's establishment to visit; here she was cordially received.

"Have you heard from Julia lately?" Gertrude enquired.

"Since you went out to the Park."

"Did she mention Kitty?"

"Kitty?"

"She said she would write to Kitty to come to Sydney."

"Bless you, Julia will talk of it for a year before she does it, and I don't think she would come."

Gertrude smothered a sigh; so many hallowed associations twined round the country girl; thoughts of the dead, and living. She had clung to the idea of Kitty's going to Sydney with more tenacity than she was aware.

"Where does Mr. Kenlow live now Miss Lenny?"

"Somewhere Windsor way, Gertrude. I don't know exactly, I'll ask Julia next time I write, if you like."

"Do if you please," she spanned the dark stream of silence, with the arch of hope: but "Hope deferred, maketh the heart sick."

The females had a good deal of news to tell Gertrude, and she took a seat to listen; but it was of that trifling kind which wearies a well regulated mind; the costs of bonnets, and dresses among the farmers' wives; or the private concerns of the wearers of the bonnets and dresses, were rather received in patience, than pleasure; and with a grateful sense of kindness past and present, which called for some self sacrifice.

They made her take some refreshment, and were really kind.

"But where is my basket?" said Gertrude as she sipped her tea. It was a little fancy thing, a parting gift from Julia Lenny, and she had brought it into town full of flowers for Miss Watchorn, and must have left it at her house.

"Leave it till you come to town next."

"No, I could not do that, your sister gave it me, and it may be long before I can come in again. I must go back."

"It will knock you up."

"Not quite so easily accomplished," she said, cheerfully replacing her bonnet and gloves.

Miss Watchorn had a visitor, the sight of whom stirred old recollections in Gertrude's mind, and yet she did not remember where she had seen him; but her thoughts flew back to Comb Ending, and further still, to the days of her earliest childhood; just as old music heard after the lapse of years, is mingled with dreamy associations which we cannot unravel.

He was a little man, in a quaint brown coat, with a round face, and round blue eyes, which looked dreamy and perplexed, from the arch of the brows

above them.

Miss Watchorn was not in the room, and Gertrude stood at the door, uncertain whether she should enter, for the stranger after one glance at her, had fixed his eyes again upon the ceiling. On the sofa lay her basket, and at last she summoned resolve to go in and recover it; and was just making her exit, when Miss Watchorn came in, followed by her servant, with the tea tray.

“Why my love,” ejaculated that lady.

Gertrude explained.

“Yes indeed. I saw the basket, and was intending to take care of it for you: but you must come in now, and be introduced to my friend, a most excellent gentleman, Dr. Jejeware.”

“Jeweware—Dr. Jeweware.”

“Certainly, my dear what”—

“He—does he know me, does he remember,” began Gertrude much excited, for the village surgeon who had attended her mother through the closing hours of her life, was before her. She passed her hostess, and approaching the little man, said quickly.

“Dr. Jeweware! do you not remember me? Gertrude Gonthier: the little Gertrude, you used to give broth and medicines to, for her sick mother;” her tears were falling as she spoke.

“Very remarkable,” said Miss Watchorn, a little “tiffed” at not being allowed time to introduce Gertrude, in a more courteous manner.

He passed his hand over his grey hair, and shining round forehead, as if trying to collect his scattered ideas.

“Do you not remember” pursued the girl in a tone low and tremulous, for she was weeping. “The day my mother died, and how you lifted me from her side, and spoke kindly to me, and then Mr. Vyner took me in his arms and let me cry on his shoulder.” She could not proceed.

“What was the case?” he said in a puzzled tone.

“Typhus fever.”

“The year?”

She told him.

“There were a great many cases of typhus that year.”

Gertrude drew back; to her there was but one case, one which could never be associated, nor lost, in a crowd—that one was her mother's. She did not observe that he looked kindly, but she begged pardon in a low tone, and retired.

“What a singular meeting!” remarked Miss Watchorn, following her to the outer door, “the doctor has only just come out: things went bad at home, so his friends procured him a post as emigrant ship doctor, and he

has just landed. He will settle here I think. A most excellent man, a friend of my poor dear brother Ben's, who died in the Indies." Miss Watchorn carried her handkerchief to her eyes; and with a mutual grasp of the hand they parted.

Gertrude wept till her strength was nearly exhausted; and when a pedestrian enquired the way to Markarld Park, she could scarcely reply through her tears that she was going there.

"Then perhaps," he returned "you will act as my guide, for I am a stranger in these parts, and am about to make a short visit to Mr. Markarld."

Gertrude was trying to compose herself; her companion had that quiet grave manner which elicits confidence, but his kind tone had unhinged her again: he did not make any remark for a while, further than enquiring if he could mitigate her affliction; and the gentle "no thank you," silenced him.

The road was rather solitary; carts and wayfarers passed occasionally; they were persons belonging to farms bordering the road; high trees cast their shadows across the path, but occasionally yielded as if to reveal some rural scene of beauty; at one of these spots both paused involuntarily; the woods intermingling with fields, and orchards, and homesteads, the lowing of cattle, and the chirping of birds presented a peaceful picture.

"Do you ever hold communion with nature?" enquired the traveller.

"Often, particularly when I am sad, or weary."

"And you find it refreshes your spirit?" he said, so kindly that Gertrude's timidity was forgotten.

"Yes, very frequently, but sometimes I seem to need a stronger power than its gentle influences."

"And you cannot account for that," very gently.

"No."

"Shall I tell you?"

Gertrude's face looked her reply.

"Do you not think it is the purity which breathes over nature, and the idea which it carries with it of God's presence and fatherly care, that acts as a balm upon our earth-weariness; but if we do not recognize the spirit, and look only at the visible objects, must they not fail to communicate the peace and calm we seek from them?"

"Sometimes it is so hard to see the hidden meaning of things."

"Have you not found a sure resting place?" he enquired in a grave earnest tone.

Gertrude's eyes glistening in tears spoke her reply.

"Of all these things we might employ the words of Ezra," he continued after a pause, during which, both had taken a survey of the fine landscape,

“Ye are holy unto the Lord, the vessels are holy also, and the silver and gold are a free will offering unto the Lord God of your fathers. Watch ye and keep them until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests.” Gertrude thought of that weighing of all things, before the Chief of Priests with a slight sinking of heart; her companion appeared to divine her feelings, for he continued.

“I have ever found that in all trials however great, unexpected, or insupportable, that strength has been meted out as my need required; not extra strength. He who commanded the fragments to be gathered up that *nothing* be lost, does not supply what we cannot use, therefore in effect waste; but ‘as thy day so shall thy strength be.’ This is the promise, and observe it well; the trouble looming on the horizon appears quite beyond our powers of endurance, it is so now, but when its day comes, the spirit to bear it will have been supplied—Fear not: in some respects we have no right to look forward, or back; but live only in the present. Faith makes all easy. ‘It is good always to wait on the Lord.’ ”

Such words had long been strangers to Gertrude, they moved her to tears; but the load was lifted off her heart: she wondered who her companion was; and as he swung his portmanteau over his shoulder to resume their way, he said.

“I have been travelling through these colonies for some time on business connected with science; but I am about to return to Europe immediately.”

They went on, Gertrude rejoicing in the kind tone, and quite respectful manner which added a peculiar weight to his words it was the union of the Christian and accomplished man of the world, but the latter, without the former, would have been but the gilding—the richest acquirements and conquests of mind would be but the strong man beating the air; a victory over shadows, if divested of Christianity.

By the time the short distance intervening between the scenes they had admired, and the Park was traversed, Gertrude had recovered her composure though her cheeks were white, and when the drawing-room door closed upon the visitor, she ran up stairs to her little work-room, feeling that beneath the same roof was a friend; and all the evening over her sewing, she recalled his words; his manner had forcibly reminded her of Mr. Tudor; but the stranger was many years his senior.

The sight of the village surgeon had been rather painful than otherwise: every one connected with her native place was a friend in her eyes, and to be utterly forgotten, it was too bad: but she half laughed when she recalled how she had startled him, and made him rub his hair on end, and roll his round eyes.

Even moral objects associated in the mind with beings and things we

have loved, and which live only in memory, rise in our estimation; how fondly and tenderly we speak of the dead: the little errors, the infirmities of temper, are no longer apparent; death has cleared up the clouds which hang over the living, as the sun rising above the world exhales the nightly vapours, we twine round the dead our affections: our most amiable feelings are exercised in re-producing them in the fairest colors, Ah! tell us not that death separates us from the beings we have loved: for that love binds them to us for ever.

Thus Dr. Muir writes of his dead child:

“Do what I may, go where I will,
Thou meet'st my sight;
There dost thou glide before me still
A form of light;
I feel thy breath upon my cheek,
I see thee smile, I hear thee speak.”

So Gertrude felt as she pondered upon the images of the past, and mentally decided that Dr. Jeweware would remember her when he had time to think of it—how strange that he should have been the college friend of that dear brother Ben, who died in the Indies: about whom Miss Watchorn so often spoke. The anecdotes she had told Gertrude, had conveyed to her the impression that he was a most eccentric and absent minded man. She had heard of his sitting half a day beside a fish stream, and wondering at length that his patience met with no reward, he began to look after his hook, and found that his line was twisted round the branches of an alder tree above his head, and the gay fly swinging listlessly in the air, quite guiltless of piscatory depredations. Many similar reminiscences of Mr. Benjamin Watchhorn crossed her mind; from all of which it appeared that he must have been a very suitable companion for Dr. Jeweware; for Miss Watchorn had infected her with the true colonial fashion of conferring the degree of M.D. indiscriminately.

Gertrude hoped to have seen the man of science again, before he left: but the constant confinement necessary to complete the tasks allotted to her, and the vast difference between the needle-woman and the visitor prevented her wish being accomplished, and he left without her seeing more than an occasional glance of him, through the window in the distance.

Her dislike to her situation had considerably augmented upon a more intimate acquaintance with it. Mr. Markarld was a corpulent man with a stentorian voice, and issued commands in a haughty manner; but she came

little in contact with him. The younger members of the family were excessively petted. Like many indolent persons, Mrs. Markarld found it easier to yield to the children's wishes, than by a present firmness to teach them obedience; a constant warfare for whom should be ruler, was the natural result; and trouble multiplied, even while the mother said "let them have, or let them do, this, or that, I cannot be troubled."

Gertrude could not escape suffering in so ill-regulated a household; it was no uncommon thing for little master Albert to insist on wearing his new best coat, which had taken her hours of patient stitching to braid handsomely; and Victoria the youngest daughter would exact similar indulgences. Many an alarming fit of illness resulted from disobedience in eating green fruit, and other unwholesome things; and indeed the children were the fertile sources of incessant suffering. The nurse, a warm-hearted Welsh woman, used frequently to run up to Gertrude's little workroom, shedding tears of vexation, and lamenting her vexations of that thousand and one description which spoilt little folks inflict; and at other times, some incensed occupant of the nursery would burst in to tell her about nurse. Gertrude was quite perplexed how to steer a middle course, so as to offend neither party.

We speak of little things, there are no little things in life: is not the ocean filled by drops? the mountain built of grains? and the life of man is made up of little things; little sorrows added together, till they become a burden that would be insupportable, were it not for the trivial joys which mingle with them. In great sorrows the whole force of our spirit arises to meet them; but the mass of existence is not made up of violence, as the forest presents more deer than lions; and the air is peopled rather by sparrow and larks, than eagles; then

"Since trifles make the sum of human things,
A *small* unkindness is a great offence."

And a yet higher voice says, "Whatever therefore ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them." To woman especially is the command given, for hers is the hand to smooth the pillow for the aching head, to moisten the parched lips, 'tis hers to point the sufferer to his God, to tell the babe of him who blessed the little children, and to make her dwelling a home of happiness and peace.

Chapter XXV.

Now what avail all prudent fears,
All counsels of the good and wise,
All honest bargains, social ties,
All soft relations, household's tears?
The golden mouth'd has spoken, 'tis enough,
So farewell conscience, love, and all such stuff.

S.M. HERALD.

Tho' long of winds and waves the sport,
Condemn'd in wretchedness to roam;
Live! thou shalt reach a shelt'ring port,
A quiet home.

Where'er thy lot, where'er thou be,
Confess thy folly—kiss the rod;
And in thy chast'ning sorrows see
The hand of God.

A bruised reed he will not break;
Afflictions all his children feel,
He wounds them for his mercy's sake,
He wounds to heal.

MONTGOMERY.

TUDOR'S apprehensions that his purchase would prove in want of the owner's presence, were not unfounded. It had been a superior place, which had been suffered to fall into premature decay.

The orchard trees were grown over with lichens, the fences out of repair, the dwelling and out-houses requiring prompt attention.

He had been necessitated to purchase without seeing the place, at the representation of a gentleman whose opinion he considered reliable; but though the first feeling, was one of disappointment, a careful survey of his dominions satisfied him of its intrinsic value.

The persevering energy of his character had abundant cause to display itself.

“Mr. Tudor, I do think you find a comfort in having so much to do; had the farm been in order, it strikes me you would have felt at a loss.” The speaker was the gold-seeker.

Tudor turned an enquiring eye upon him.

"I am the reverse of pleased to find things in ruins; but since they are so, I must use every exertion to get them to rights—it must be done."

The little man was silent, watching Tudor, who was engaged in some carpenter's work; and then enquired, "Why toil so—a life long, when one stroke, one lucky moment, might make you rich?"

"It might, and it might not; and while there is a counterpolling risk, I prefer a steady certainty; the words of old were 'In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread,' and though I would not bind down the enterprize of any, I cannot conceive that a precarious and hazardous course, is one most likely to be beneficial."

"Many have made fortunes at the diggings."

"They have, and many lost their all;" he went on sawing.

"Mr. Tudor, I have seen indications—will you and your men help me? we must succeed, we *shall* succeed—there is gold there, gold, gold, sir." Each enunciation of the word was more vehement, but his companion was unmoved.

"Is it on my ground these indications are?"

"Yes—there—just below those rocks, in the hollow."

"I give you permission to search, if you desire it; but Mr. Rigden, I tell you candidly, I would far rather see you occupied in some steady calling, more suited to your years and education."

The young man fixed his eyes gravely and kindly upon the prospector, who shrunk before the look. The force of Tudor's character was gaining an ascendancy over him; and the firm manly bearing could not fail to impress him favourably with his principles; but the love of gold is mighty in its way, and day by day found him toiling at the foot of the rocks, which formed the bank of a small ravine, traversing Tudor's land.

The old man was a study for an artist with his brown skin, his keen little eyes sparkling with eager expectancy, his white hair and beard waving in the wind, and the gay red frock of the digger, and the long leather boots. To his host he was a sad sight, a being wasting life, and all those noble powers which God has given to man, which elevate him above the beasts of the field, and declare to us that he was made in His image, and he has the glorious heritage of mind and knowledge wherewith to break up the dark fallow of ignorance and untruth.

Tudor's time and attention were so incessantly occupied and taxed, that he rarely, if ever paid a visit to the scene of the gold-seeker's labours; but day by day he saw him move more wildly hopeful, and intent on the pursuit, till at length one morning, he left Burrengumbie-house, with the expressed opinion, that before night, he should have reached the deposit.

The afternoon advanced, and Tudor began to wonder what had become of Eber Rigden; he was so eccentric, that had not his leather saddle-bags remained in his dormitory, and the old tanned pony grazed in the paddock, he should have concluded that he had extended his tour. Some weeks had now been expended upon the excavation he was making in the gully, and he had dug a large pit with infinite labour, and no golden return; still he would not give up, but expected each day's toil to reward him by a rich deposit.

The sun set, and still he was absent, and his host began to make enquiries: he had been seen early in the morning with pick and shovel, taking his way to the glen—no one knew more. Tudor turned his steps in that direction—it was full a mile from the house, but a rapid walk shortly brought him to the place—an involuntary cry of horror escaped him, the bank undermined by the old man's work had fallen upon the pit; where it had been was a mass of rock and earth, piled in a confused mound. He lost no time in lamentations, but returned to the farm—spades, pickaxes, and lanthorn, for it was now dark, and every likely requisite were hastily collected; and every male inhabitant of Burrengumbie repaired to the spot. Tudor worked, and directed the operations of the others. The earth and smaller stones were with comparative ease dug away, but then a tremendous obstacle presented itself in the shape of a huge block of stone, that they could not lift.

“It must be propped up, and we must dig away from under it.”

The master's commands were obeyed; but not without long and arduous exertions.

“To think of the old critter burying himself alive,” said one.

“Alive! He's as dead as that”—and the speaker kicked a stone emphatically.

“He may be alive,” remarked Tudor, in a tone which conveyed his apprehensions.

It was a dark foggy night, and the profound stillness was hardly broken by the occasional cry of a curlew, or duck.

It was awful to reflect on the condition of a fellow-creature beneath that boulder of stone, and embankment of earth. At length, an opening was effected—the rock had preserved the pit from being filled with the falling rubbish.

Tudor had arranged that the ground should be lowered, so that when by the help of levers, the rock was raised, its own weight should slide it down the bank, and props were at hand to prevent its tipping into the hole.

How eagerly the rays from the lanthorn were turned into the black tomb beneath; at the bottom crouched the old man, alive, but with a vacant

scared look, and almost suffocated. They lowered a ladder, and Tudor descending by the aid of ropes and those above, lifted him out.

He did not speak—he did not appear rejoiced, he looked bewildered, and knelt on the sod above, with his hands hanging listlessly by his side, as he had knelt in the pit.

They bound the two ladders together, spread coats, lifted the old man on to them, and then carried him home.

Once he spoke, and said, “God help me,” in such a tone as he had spoken whilst entombed: a voice which asked nothing of earth; which expected no help, but from on High. So through the night as Tudor sat by his side, he now and then caught the same agonized “God help me.” He talked to him, modulating his voice softly and hopefully; for a while he did not heed him, but at length he fixed his eyes upon his face, a great tear coursed down his weather-beaten cheek, the flood gates gave way, and he wept till nature was exhausted, and a merciful and refreshing slumber succeeded.

Eber Rigden was not to awake well, or nearly so; but to all human calculations he was slowly traversing that painful path which leads into the valley of the Shadow of Death—it seemed that even then the funeral shades brooded over him.

Day and night Tudor watched over the sufferer: those who did not know him, nor the motives which actuated him, were surprised: but they who felt as he did the value of a *soul*, appreciated the longing desire, the same impulse, nay settled principle, which extorted from Paul the words, “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer for Israel is, that they may be saved.” He would not weary, he would not be discouraged, but he would find an entry through the avenues which love unlocks, to the old man's heart; he would not rouse his pride by dictating, but gently, as opportunity served, he would drop a guiding, or cheering word; he would light the lamp of religion, and lure him by its flame, not drag him to it: thus patiently for awhile the young man laid by the engrossing pursuits and cares, which the casual observer would have thought him to deem all important: so energetically and thoroughly did Edward Tudor bring every power to bear upon what ever was his occupation at the time.

The last mellow rays of the setting sun were filling the room, gilding every object, burnishing the simple furniture, like the glad song of angels proclaiming good will to men.

The old man was better, but he lay in utter helplessness upon his couch. Tudor was seated near him, an open book upon his knee, but he was silent, and had long ceased to read, for the invalid had but just awoke from slumber.

“Are you there?” he enquired presently. The young man bent over him.

“I have been thinking,” he said, passing a thin hand across his brows, as if to collect his scattered ideas.

“I have been thinking much since I have been laying here— Do you think I shall recover?”

“I have now no doubt of it.”

“Thank you—when I am stronger, I will return home.”

Tudor had never heard that he had a home, and looked interrogatingly.

“I wish to tell you all.”

“Be careful that you do not fatigue yourself.”

“It will weary me less to tell you, than to lie here thinking— always thinking.”

“I had a wife long years ago,” he continued, “a good, gentle woman, who loved her husband and children truly, but she died. Mr. Tudor, you do not know what that word conveys. I was alone—she had been everything to me. I felt her loss at every turn, but more than all, I needed her influence, for she was a Christian. My children grew up following in her steps; they were three daughters; the first some years older than the others; for we had buried two babes. At length Alice married, and together we all emigrated to this colony. For some years we did well, and were happy: but then gold was found. I wished to go to the ‘diggings’, and persuaded Francis to accompany me: he was not used to labour, nor to endure hardships, and he died there—my girls took home their widowed sister, and her babes; and to support them, they taught a school for young children.

Sir, from that day, I have wandered about seeking wealth, seeking what I have never found. They have written to me repeatedly, praying me to return home: they have advertised for me, when through my frequent change of abode, they could not tell where to address me; but I always hoped to find a monster nugget, or a rich deposit, and to lift them out of poverty. But now, if God permit, I will return to them. I will help them if I can. May God have mercy on me.”

His prayer found a warm response in the heart of his companion.

“I highly commend your determination,” he returned.

“I never sent them a penny. I've wandered about, spending what I have made—but it's past now, for ever. Mr. Tudor, from the time I first knew you, I have been uneasy about it, if Christians would only think of the effect their example has.” He paused, for the agitation his narrative had awakened, had fatigued him.

The moisture which glistened in the eyes of his companion, was not derogatory to his manliness.

After awhile Rigden was able to leave his room, and sit in a large arm-chair beneath the shade of a cluster of mimosas, which grew at the end of

the house, and here he passed many hours of solitude, with a bible for his companion; gathering instruction from its sacred pages, and holding communion with his own heart.

The perfect silence of an Australian landscape remote from towns, has been remarked by many travellers. A calm almost approaching to lassitude, appears to be the prevailing feeling of animate nature, and to be sympathised in by the inanimate. The soft light blue tints of the sky, perhaps an evening sky, scattered over by the most gorgeous tinted clouds, which the painter might vainly essay to represent on canvas. Crimson and rose in splendid zones spreading across the arch of heaven, with masses of golden clouds floating through the serene ether, the rich ray reflected upon the earth; scarcely a breeze waves the dark foliage of the eucalyptic forest; the birds chiefly retire to rest in silence, or only the occasional caw of the crow, the wail of the curlew, or the wild peal of the laughing jackass in retired valleys, or far in the bush, startle the echoes. The herds slowly seek a sheltered spot where they may take their night's repose. The labourer returning from his diurnal toil, goes to his home rather to seek rest, than to break the hush of nature. Later in the evening the children's voices are heard as they sport in the cool breeze which disperses the summer's day heat; and then the cries of nocturnal animals sound in the woods.

'Tis summer's eve, a gentle hour
The west is rich in sombre sheen;
And 'mid the garden's leafy trees,
Springs up a cool refreshing breeze,
And the pale stars are faintly seen.

There is no twilight, night immediately closes in, and the vivid hues, fade into grey, with the rapidity which characterises hot climates.

A decided expression of chagrin sat upon the face of Eber Rigden's 'Rosinante,' when the cumbrous leather-bags and saddle once more were placed on his back; his days of "living in clover" were at an end, and his long ears slouched mournfully, as he turned an anxious eye in the direction of his unwonted luxuriant pasturage, and uttered a farewell groan. His rider eager to return to his family, and the path of duty, gathered up the reins, once more pressed the hand of his kind host, and started on his way; the brief acquaintance fraught with many important events terminated, as acquaintanceships among an almost nomadic population frequently do, with the circumstances, which for a time brought the parties into association.

Chapter XXVI.

She saw at once, yet sank not, trembled not,
Beneath that grief, that *loneliness of lot*,
Within that meek, fair form were feelings high,
Which deem'd not, till they found their energy.

CORSAIR.

MR. Ben borrowed Gertrude's books, and returned them with elegant verses written in the margins, and extending over some fifty pages; and Miss Watchorn although she pressed her to come and take a cup of tea upon those rare occasions, when her multifarious duties were fulfilled, and she could walk into town to see her friends, was evidently anxious about the young man, and inclined to view the subject seriously; and she lamented to her neighbour Mrs. Loring, that it was an awful responsibility to have the charge of the dear boy, her only sister's only son too; the 'dear boy' was long past twenty. But, for all her fears and anxieties, she really liked Gertrude, although she had grown rather critical about her claim to beauty; still she would press one of the little hands in hers, and imprint a very cordial kiss upon the sweet grave face, and utter a truth when she said, "I am so glad to see you my dear."

Time was passing on, as days and weeks do, whether we are joyous or sorrowing; whether the way be rough or smooth for us, the wheels of Time's chariot linger not, though we are talking of long days, and short days, for we count our happy periods as only too short, and our afflictions as too lingering in their course.

Meanwhile Gertrude heard nothing of Kitty Kenlow; for her cousin Miss Lenny, did not know her address, and the two families never thought of keeping up a correspondence: so the past seemed to have been a dream, and to have left nought behind it but the loved remembrances of what once had been, "all the old familiar faces," seen by mental vision alone, and all the words of counsel, or love, which were treasured up in her heart.

Dr. Jejeware had gone some little distance into the country, at the invitation of a gentleman who resided there, and Gertrude had therefore not seen him; but she expressed so anxious a wish to do so that it brought a note from Miss Watchorn to inform her that he was about to return to town, and would take tea with her the following evening, where she hoped to see her young friend.

How was this to be managed? Gertrude had great misgivings about

soliciting a holiday, for she had been to town only a few days previously.

“If you please ma'am I have completed master Albert's set of pinafores,” said Gertrude as she stood, later in the day, at the parlour door.

“Very well, put them down, and come here and see if you can do anything with this child—this young gentleman.”

Master Albert had insisted on making a purchase of some gay yellow and blue cake ornaments when out walking that morning, and had eaten them, much to his after discomfiture.

The parlour presented a scene of some confusion, for the little fellow was lamenting and tossing upon a sofa, with flushed cheeks and aching head, surrounded by scent bottles, and disregarded toys. It was clearly an inauspicious moment to solicit a favour, and Gertrude exerted herself for the child's relief, and for a time forgot her errand.

“You will never eat any more of those things dear,” she said coaxingly, as she nursed the boy, and awaited the effects of a wineglass full of some pleasant beverage, insidiously charged with a remedy for his ailment; for the young people of the Park were always cheated into taking medicine.

“She was a bad woman that sold them, she ought to be hung for it,” returned master Albert savagely.

However, an hour later, he was comfortably sleeping.

“I have a favour to ask if you please ma'am,” said Gertrude timidly, as she withdrew her hand from beneath the child's head.

“Well.”

“May I go in to town to-morrow afternoon?”

“I really do not see what you want running into town so often, but you may go.”

Gertrude thanked her, and retired.

Miss Watchorn's little sitting-room had received every attention, in honor of the expected tea-drinkers, and Gertrude added a tastefully arranged bunch of native flowers to the other adornments.

Dr. Jejeware was as absent as ever, but thought he had seen Gertrude before.

She did not try to recall their former acquaintance, because she imagined that it would by degrees recur to him.

“Did you like the country,” enquired Miss Watchorn, as she did the honors of the tea-table.

“I am not competent to judge, I did not see much; but ma'am there are no roads, nor bridges.”

“Indeed.”

“No ma'am. I had to ride on horseback the first day's journey, and then my friend's son met me with a gig, but the track they called a road was

dreadful, dreadful ma'am: one moment the wheels were in a gutter, the next, we were in imminent danger of being upset by passing over the stump of a tree; and then we came to a stream, 'creek' they call it, and if you will believe me ma'am not a vestige of a bridge: my companion actually drove through it, making the horse gallop up and down the declivities, for the banks were steep."

Gertrude smiled; she had seen such roads, and readily filled in the picture.

Dr. Jejeware bore warm testimony to the hospitality so universal in Australia. The frank cordial welcome of the settler at once puts his visitor on the footing of a friend; and the desire of all the household is, to make him comfortable. The doctor rather possessed what Miss Whitford has called the "the gift of silence," rather than the gift of speech, but upon this occasion he grew eloquent, and described the monotonous forest, the slovenly stump clearing, and other peculiarities of the scene, with as much exactitude as if his audience had never witnessed the same objects. Australian scenery has a peculiar character, which however varied in detail, bears the same prominent features, with the exception of those warm gullies lying among the vast ranges, where the traveller is suddenly environed by tropical productions. The greater part of New South Wales, presents the wide spread Eucalyptic forest, scantily intermingled with other forest trees: the mountains, pure blue when seen from a distance, or immediately before us, modified by a granite, or sand-stone formation, the latter are the flower gardens of the wilds. The richest hues, the purple and crimson of Tyre, the most unsullied white, and azure, the warmest yellow, with every variety of mingled tint are lavishly interwoven, as if He would have the "solitary places" to praise Him.

The sand-stone range crossed, the same features of forest land recur, till the geological formation recalls the botanical productions, and we again discover the same plants, in the same soil.

These ranges of mountains are cleft by tremendous ravines, over which the rugged cliff beetles in stupendous masses, inhabited by the Wallaby, and Native Dog. But such grand scenery formed no part of Dr. Jejeware's explorations; he had not watched the storm burst above the mountains, and the torrent pour down the chasms which rend the declivities, and mingle with the waters of the rivers, emanating from these localities.

"I had the gratification of seeing a savage, ma'am" he remarked, assisting himself to a slice of cake.

"They are nearly extinct now, in this part of the country."

"So I was informed. A very inferior looking creature."

"Among white people they are degraded by intemperance," rejoined

Gertrude, who during her residence at Murrumbowrie had imbibed the kindly feeling for the unfortunate Aboriginal race, which her late employer and Mr. Tudor had entertained.

The doctor turned his round eyes upon her, and uttered a puzzled “hem.” Miss Watchorn went back to the natives, she had known one who acted as drayman, and was much valued by his master. Gertrude recollected Urutta, and another fine young man, who was breaking in horses at Wattletree Flat; and they were growing warm in their praises, when Mr. Ben's entrance changed the subject.

“How is it that you are at leisure so early?” enquired his Aunt, making room for him beside her on the sofa.

“Not much doing; country folks not in to-day. Town looks rather dull Miss Gonthier?”

“Rather sir.”

“Very quiet, nothing stirring.”

Gertrude thought there never was, but did not say so, for Mr. Ben had a habit of speaking of the struggling little township, as if it were a large mercantile city. She could not lose sight of the fields and gardens, nor the goats and fowls securely enjoying themselves, in blissful ignorance of surveyors' marks, and legislative intentions, in the streets, or where streets were to be. A small meadow did not represent a market to her, nor a cluster of stunted bushes a crescent, or terrace. Mr. Ben used to talk grandly of poets' inspirations, and poets' visions, and she concluded it was by these means that he saw the future town, when the chrysalis should have unfolded its wings, and spread them over the surrounding meadows, in all the glories of its exalted state.

“Another cup of tea my dear boy?” interrupted his aunt, who had a horror of tête-à-tête conversations.

“Thank you aunt, I'll try a drop more. Had a run up the country, doctor?”

Dr. Jejeware was absently gazing at Gertrude. “Very remarkable,” muttered he.

“Do you think the country remarkable, Doctor?”

“Very remarkable,” he repeated.

Mr. Ben ran his hand through his hair, setting it on end, in a most comical manner, and looked fierce, preparing to defend his country, with right good patriotism.

“Gertrude Gonthier. Yes to be sure, a little girl with a pale face, crying.”

“Yes sir! yes,” returned she, between laughter and tears, as she claimed the portrait.

“The mad clock-maker, a white cottage at the end of the lane—it was the first case of typhus.”

There was no doubt about the tears now, Gertrude could only nod.

“Very strange that we should meet here,” said the doctor, coming round the table to shake hands.

Miss Watchorn was quite affected, and scarcely had voice to explain to her nephew the meaning of the scene.

But Gertrude had a long walk before her, and she was turning over how it was to be effected without the escort of Mr. Ben, when Miss Watchorn made him promise to spend the evening with her, and the young girl insisted on his keeping his promise, and started on her way very much relieved that she was able to indulge in the train of thoughts her visit had awakened. She received the blessing that had softened the many trials of her previous life, and gratefully obeyed the injunction “in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy path.” For the unknown future, she would be brave about it, and pray for those who were far from her, that every blessing might descend upon them, now and for ever, and that the erring might be turned from the error of their ways; so with her loving woman's heart, she was mingling the absent and the present, and extending “gentle offices” to all.

Gertrude had a little room up stairs, where she worked; it had a garret roof, and skylight-window, looking up at the blue sky, where the clouds seemed always hurrying along, in shapes which if she looked at them long, assumed the likeness of old friends, just as queer faces peer out of coal fires, for the mind stamps its image on all around it; sometimes she thought those forms whispered to her words of comfort, or reproof; now they would say—

Creatures of God, his will is for thy weal eternally progressing;
Fear not to trust a Maker's love, nor a Saviour's ransom:
He drank for all—for thee and me—the poison of our deeds;
We shall not die, but live.”

Anon when she fell into idle dreams, regretting how different circumstances were to what she would have them, she heard again the words that Tudor had once repeated to her.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Finds us farther than to-day.

* * * * *

It was rather a lonely little place, though the birds found such a gentle inmate, that they would perch near the open window, and twitter and chirp, and sometimes in their confidence, skim round the room, bringing in a ray of light upon their glossy wings; they seemed to think the vicinity of that skylight the safest place for their broods to essay their first flight: and Gertrude became quite fond of her feathered companions; sometimes master Freddy would spring in at the door, and put the flutterers to instant flight; and at last he was always lying in wait for them, scattering handful of pebbles among the little creatures till they became disgusted, and sought a more retired dwelling. Then she tried to extend her "gentle charities" upon a red geranium, planted in a jug without a handle, and a hole broken in the side, but it grew yellow and sickly, and finally died.

The servants called her proud, because she did not associate with them; she was indeed in the unpleasant intermediate situation which is of all positions most painful; happily for her she was sustained by Christian principles, and this ungenial discipline tended materially to strengthen a disposition less disposed to judge for itself, than to confide in the opinion of others; she would rather yield up her judgment with her affections; but she had been forced to scrutinize the motives and actions of those who surrounded her, and it had checked a disposition, that would have grown into an error.

Sometimes, when not very busy, she would fetch the gardener's little child, and keep it for an hour or two, when its mother had much to do. Little Maggie was a plump, good natured babe, just learning to walk alone, and each successful attempt was a source of much satisfaction and pride to her young friend. Children instinctively attach themselves to the amiable and pure, by a heaven bestowed instinct, which sees further than even the keen eye of the worldly wise; it may be dazzled by appearances, or deceived by a specious bearing, but the child obeys its impulse. Perhaps an angelic hand directs the little one; be that as it may, little Maggie often cheered Gertrude's solitude, and was by no means indisposed to do so.

She could spare a few kind words to her little charge, and keep it amused without neglecting her work, it enabled her to be a comfort and help to the child's mother, and bestowed upon herself the rich reward which springs from kind actions.

Chapter XXVII.

Hither he came, and falling on his knees,
Like th' humble publican smote on his breast,
And this confession self-accusing made.

CUMBERLAND.

TO MR. E. TUDOR.

SIR.—I am induced to write this statement of facts to you, believing, that the subject will prove of interest. The confession given below, was made me in the strictest confidence; and with a promise to inviolably preserve it; but considering that from the part you had taken in the melancholy events, you should be acquainted with all the particulars, I pressed upon the dying penitent to permit me to confide them to you; and to lay a statement before a Magistrate. About three weeks since, I was summoned at midnight, to visit the supposed dying bed of a person who had met with an accident. I complied, and as I rode beside the messenger, learnt that the dying man was taking cattle to the Sydney Market; that in pursuing a stray beast, he had been thrown; and so seriously hurt that his end appeared to be very near. He was taken to a hut by the way-side, a place notorious for illicit spirit trade; but too seriously injured to be removed. He had been visited by Dr. C——

The room in which he lay was wretched in the extreme; dark, and cheerless; with a searching wind, laden with drizzling rain, penetrating the chinks between the logs, but I found him unmindful of these things, he was eagerly watching for my coming; and when the woman who entered the room with me announced “the Parson,” I could see by the dim light of the flaming candle which she carried, that he struggled to rise—he was perfectly sensible, but appeared restless and irritable—his sufferings were acute, and served to fever his mind, and imparted to his eye a wild brilliancy. During many succeeding days I visited and prayed with him—he continued to sink rapidly; and I could perceive laboured under some heavy mental disquiet; but it was not till his powerful frame was reduced to infantine weakness, and the faintest hope of recovery had faded, that in trembling and subdued whispers, he poured into my ears the account of the fearful crime of which unintentionally he had been guilty. His frequent mention of your name, it was, which induced my pressing upon him to consent to your sharing the dark secret; and it was not till all human pride and jealousies had fallen before a sense of sinfulness, and the penitent hung

like the thief of old, to the merciful remembrance of his Lord, that I could gain his consent.

He described his temper as violent, and he was evidently very uncultured. It appears that the late Mrs. Doherty, had within the last two, or more years, a young person residing in her family named Gertrude Gonthier: that an attachment was formed between this unhappy young man, Charles Inkersole, and the young lady, or at least, if not reciprocated by her was by fits warm and sincere in his case; and so entirely did he consider the matter to rest with his seeking, that he did not hesitate to mention his approaching union, to many persons mutually acquainted. It would appear however, that he was absent some time at the Abercrombie; that after his return he began to have doubts of her affection for him, and to believe that he had been mistaken; he made her an offer, and was refused, in a manner firm, and decided, though kind.

Shortly after this, being about to visit Sydney, to make arrangements respecting the purchase of certain lands at the Crookwell, he determined once more to see, and endeavour to persuade Miss Gonthier to change her resolve. On visiting Murrumbowrie, he did not see her, but impelled by the hopes of meeting her in a sitting room, which you will know from his description, he entered the house—the room opens from a passage running through the dwelling, and communicates with the verandah by glass doors; in this room he found, not Miss Gonthier, but her guardian Mrs. Doherty; and warm words were bandied between them: he accusing her of defaming his character, by charging him with cattle stealing; she taunted him with the change in the young lady's feelings, which she had perceived; and expressed hopes or rather asserted, that the lady in question was, or would be affianced to yourself; irritated by jealousy, he struck her with the loaded handle of his whip on the forehead, as she rose from her chair; that she had fallen at his feet, and he had rushed from the room, mounted his horse, which he had hung up at a little distance, and rode rapidly away; subsequently he learnt that the blow was fatal.

Gleaning from his narrative the faithful attachment which had subsisted between yourself and employer, I have been induced to dwell with such minuteness on these details. For myself the circumstances have affected and interested me in no ordinary degree. To see a fine, and I may add handsome young man, the wreck of passion uncontrolled—tortured in mind and body—evidently approaching the grave, and ignorant almost of the name of religion; was a sight, the contemplation of which aroused in my mind the question, might not something more effective be done for the scattered population in the interior? I shall certainly feel stirred up to do my utmost for my own extensive parish.

Of a death-bed repentance I can never speak without much care, and apprehension; yet I trust that the young man's contrition was sincere; and his faith firmly fixed upon the Atonement of the Son of God. Such sir, are the principal features of this sad history. I direct my letter to your mother's residence, as the only place to which the departed man could guide me, in my search for you. If you should wish to see me, I shall be happy to give you any information in my power; and if you are aware of any suspicions resting falsely upon any one, I am sure I need not point out to you how desirable it is that they should be removed, &c.

Chapter XXVIII.

Knowest thou the deep, cool dale,
Where church-like stillness doth prevail;
Where neither flock nor herd you meet;
Which hath no name nor track of feet?

VELHAVEN.

THE elder Miss Markarld had long been in delicate health. Two years previous to Gertrude's introduction to the family, she had been thrown from her horse, and severely injured; the consequence had been frequent attacks of chest complaints, which kept her an invalid, and made her a perpetual patient for Dr. Morris. About this time a cold augmented her malady, and she was ordered to have change of air.

Mrs. Markarld could not leave her family, and the younger sister was from home.

“Could not Gertrude accompany me mamma? She is quiet, and I cannot bear noise,” said Miss Markarld.

“I think she is the very person; but where will you go?”

“To the Shoalhaven. There are those Scotch people who used to rent our bush farm; they were very decent people, and I could board with them, for they live there now.”

Mr. Markarld was not disposed to entertain this idea, but his daughter's mind was set upon it; and she had her own will in every thing, as agitation was considered injurious, and any opposition immediately excited her.

Most unexpectedly, Gertrude found herself in the midst of preparations for a journey, by land and sea; the ordinary confusion of such an event, heightened in a tenfold degree by Miss Markarld's ill health rendering many extra precautions and preparations essential.

The ludicrous confusion and bustle of a short steam trip promised to reach its utmost height, as the travellers exchanged a seat in the carriage for a place in the ladies' saloon. Gertrude indeed, was not destined to remain there long, there were packages innumerable to see after, and to know the exact locality of.

“Gertrude,” said Miss Markarld, from among a pile of pillows and shawls.

She approached.

“Where is my small bonnet box?”

“Quite safe miss, just there above that brass rod.”

“Bring it me. I cannot see it.”

The box was brought, and then returned to the same situation.

“Gertrude, where is my silk shade; I really think I dropped it on deck, go and see.”

The waves of the wide Pacific were not acting in strict conformity with their name, and the reeling movement of the vessel disposed the young girl to make sudden runs in a rather dangerous manner. The drawn shade was not on deck, and after a lengthened search, it was discovered beneath the pillows under Miss Markarld's head.

So often did the pretences arise for requiring her attention, that the notice of the other female passengers was aroused.

“I say young woman,” ejaculated a comfortable looking dame, clearly a farmer's wife, returning home after a marketing trip. “You just let her be; if she wants them things, let her get up after them,” and she gave the shawl twisted about her shoulders an indignant jerk.

Gertrude replied that the lady was ill.

“And what are you? I wonder,” demanded the zealous good wife.

The girl passed her hand over a white cheek, and smiled faintly.

The wind was getting up, and the waves in concert; there was rolling and tossing of the boat, and staggering up and down stairs, among the male passengers, and strong voices pronouncing opinions that “a southerly buster” would overtake them. Miss Markarld's fears rose with the winds, and the stewardess and Gertrude were incessantly interrogated upon the subject. A certain concomitant to water excursions seized upon the inhabitants of the various berths, and the confusion increased apace.

Gertrude found she was in perfect ignorance of the coast scenery, or the appearance of any other objects than her young mistress, and the boxes and baskets legion by name, till they were seated in a dog-cart, which their future host had brought to convey them home. The little voyage and its pleasures that might have been, and ills that were experienced, was ended, and they were driving along the banks of the Shoalhaven river: the first Australian river of any magnitude that Gertrude had seen. Mr. M'Donald lived at some distance from the mouth of the stream, and when they drew up at the farm-house door, she was reminded of the Wedlakes' residence; but here the walls were built of the trunks of the cabbage palm, and a group of standing trees cast a tropical appearance over an otherwise not very remarkable scene.

It was the old story of a farmer's upward struggles; the stumps were still standing where the trees had lately reared their ponderous heights. A nice little room had been lined with clean white calico, and the plain furniture had evidently been made the most of, in expectation of Miss Markarld's

visit. This was to be the apartment of her and Gertrude, for she needed constant care.

The weather was beautiful, and to remain much within doors not to be thought of. Miss Markarld was desirous of seeing the rich vegetation which clothes the gullies, lying between the wild mountains overhanging the higher course of the river. The gully *par excellence* they could not penetrate, but there were many beautiful spots within reach by boat, or on horseback, where the stream broken by rapids is no longer navigable.

Mrs. M'Donald would pack a basket with refreshments, and deliver it into the hands of her son David, a sturdy lad of some fourteen years; and under his escort the visitors departed for the day; the constant exposure to the fresh air, and the exercise she took, was rapidly strengthening Miss Markarld; and having no one else to speak to, she gradually attached herself to Gertrude.

Slowly guiding their horses, they would ascend the banks of the river a few miles. High mountains, rocky and wooded, rose on either side, now receding, now approaching, they rose abruptly from the water's edge, or gave place to a green level; but the tortuous course of the river required the explorers to ford it in several places, where a bank of pebbles occasioned those rapid falls in the stream, locally known as the "Rapids," or the "Crossing places." A broad belt of forest oaks resembling the fir, rather than the *Quercus*, shadowed the banks; mingled in places with the Native Lavender, the Passion-flower and other plants; but the chief attraction to the wanderers, were the gullies; here the cabbage and bangale palms moved, their feathering umbrel formed tops on high, and the sweet glossy hickory scattered its fragrant seeds, and the myrtle and free nettle, the one with small leaves, the other with large pale green foliage, added novelty to the copse wood. So thick and dense it was, that the sun's rays rather stole in, than shone, making Mosaic pavement of light and shade upon the mossy ground; dancing among ferns, and brambles, and seeming to set on fire the scarlet breasts of the king-parrots, as they sported through the matted branches, interwoven with the Virgin's Bower, and the leafless stems of a creeper peculiar to such localities. The air was heavy with odours which a thousand leaves and blooms exhaled; and the silence was broken by the notes of the creeper, the bell-bird, the stockman's whip, and the varied cries of the lyre-bird.

It was fairy land to Gertrude; she had been within a few miles of such gullies, but never before in them; they had rather appeared as *Ignis-fatuus*, than realities; but now they're actual somethings, contrasting vividly with the dry sombre forests of graceless Eucalyptic she was familiar with. Every old stump, or rock supported a superb parasite; it was nature's store-house

of jewels; literally piled up from the ground, to the topmost branches of the trees, was an almost solid mass of luxuriant vegetation—little streams of water were babbling among tree ferns, and stones, green and soft as velvet with moss.

“—The rivulet
Sends forth glad sounds, and tripping o'er its bed
Of pebbly sands, or leaping down the rocks,
Seems with continuous laughter to rejoice
In its own being.”

Pendant from the branches hung the Flying Fox, that bat of mammoth growth, wrapped round with its long dark wings—such a sight always aroused Miss Markarld's attention, and elicited a command to David M'Donald to throw a stone at the creature to awaken it from its sleep, in those twilight regions; though nocturnal in its habits, the fox obeyed the request conveyed in the language of stones, which language of projectiles finds a world-wide interpretation, and slowly buffeted away to another tree.

Where the females' wanderings would have terminated, is problematical, had not their companion interposed a grave: “We'll no go up there, I dinna ken the war and we maun be lost.”

This was unanswerable; and the idea of losing their way in such a tangled thicket, miles from any dwelling, or likelihood of meeting a traveller, had the effect David M'Donald intended; and they made retrograde steps to where they had secured their horses.

Nor were their wanderings confined to glen scenery: they ascended the lofty mountains, and gathered the nuts of the Barrumany, or Zamia Palm in the barren, sandy flats, lying back from the river; they peered into nests of birds, and the round holes in the stems and branches of trees, where the opossum and squirrel slept, rolled round like a furry ball.

David, of an evening, wonderstruck his parents by the recital of where they had been, and what they had done. One day Miss Markarld had collected a handkerchief full of sand, which glittered with mica.

“Is it gold?” David enquired.

“No, only “fools gold”—it is no value.”

“Just think on it mither; she spoilt her white handkerchief for stuff, that was no worth,” said the guide, that evening. On another occasion, his surprise was aroused by having to collect a great quantity of variegated quartz, in the provision basket, and to his discomfort carry it home; this time Mrs. M'Donald's wonder rather took the form of displeasure, and she

intimated that "Dav was unco fash'd with dragging hame sich rubbish; and it was no use when he had brought it hame."

Miss Markarld received her words in haughty silence, and withdrew to the sanctity of the calico lined room. However, the family were really kind, and disposed to put themselves to no small amount of [trouble] for the young ladies; and David on the whole, found no sources of complaint, though their rambles appeared to him entirely without aim.

"Miss Markarld, is it not damp, the dew must be falling?" The sun had already neared the horizon; the invalid was seated by the river's bank, where she had sat for an hour or two.

"No, do not disturb me," she returned peevishly. Gertrude withdrew to a short distance, and stood anxiously watching her: she looked pale and weary, and though the evening air felt mild, an imperceptible moisture must be exhaled at that hour, so near the water. Just then, a voice singing one of the old Scotch versions of the Psalms, caught her attention, and filled her with pleasurable emotion; the singer was Mr. M'Donald, and she could see him in the distance, paddling across the river in the hollowed stem of a tree, which formed into a rude canoe, was called the Mudgerie.

The golden rays of the sun were falling upon the solitary rower and his perilous bark, and dancing on the ripples they made; and on the languid evening air his voice lingered with a rich full melody, that brought the tears into the eyes of the listeners. Miss Markarld had elevated her head, but Gertrude saw her pass her hand before her eyes hurriedly, as if unwilling her emotion should be perceived. They could not clearly catch the words, but they knew it was a hymn of praise, for that was essentially the spirit of the Scotch farmer: "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord," he was ready to exclaim with the Psalmist. The hour, and the solitude added a peculiar solemnity to the act of worship. No one but themselves was in sight; the farms on the shore appeared already buried in slumber, only a few cows lowed to their calves, as they strolled leisurely along the bank and the black swans, and pelicans, passed over changing their position from the sea to the river, or the reverse, the flying fox was beating its wings like muffled drums, on its way to the orchard, in search of pillage; the whole scene was so wild and novel, and the Mudgerie so much in keeping with the rest, that Gertrude almost regretted to see it near the shore, and Mr. M'Donald sprang on a few logs piled up for a wharf.

"How would you like a sail in that wee bit of a boat miss?" he said cheerfully to Miss Markarld.

"Very much. I shall go some day," she returned determinedly.

The former understood her unbending character, so wisely refrained from strengthening her determination, by opposing it; for though his wife and

family often had crossed in it before they had a real boat, the Mudgerie was unquestionably dangerous, and liable to upset.

Gertrude had run up to the cottage for a large woollen shawl, and now advanced, and folded it round the young lady's shoulders; she did not repel her this time, but she was evidently indisposed to move, and her companion sat down to wait her pleasure.

“How happy he seems,” she said at length bitterly.

Gertrude assented.

“There are times when I hate life; when I hate myself, and every thing: what's the good of life?”

“Dear Miss Markarld, life has great good—the blessings we receive from God and from each other, and the happiness and comfort we may bestow—yes indeed, ‘the gift of life is good’” her earnest words sprung from her heart, and but feebly conveyed what she would have said.

Empty indeed is a world without God in it, no wonder if they who have not that resting-place, weary in such a sunless wilderness, at times. “No man is truly happy who is not at peace with God, and with himself.”

“Tell me all about this,” the sick girl said, after awhile; and in the silent evening scene Gertrude opened her heart to her, and told her of Christ and Him crucified; and how he has said, “Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Was her emotion to pass away with the bright tints of the evening sky? She prayed not. She had introduced her German Bible, to translate some of its glorious promises; and from that time Miss Markarld often withdrew to the seat beneath a wild fig tree on the water's side, and Gertrude sat at her feet, translating her favourite passages, or singing the grand old hymns of Luther—her cheerful, patient demeanour, had prepared the invalid to receive her words with respect, and consideration; and so much did she enjoy these quiet hours, and their rambles with David, that the period formally arranged for her stay, was constantly exceeded, and a more distant day fixed for their departure.

Sometimes when David was necessarily detained at home, they accompanied the farmer to the fields, or the barn; wide fields of onions, and potatoes, did not possess however equal interest with the noisy little corn mill.

“Coming to see us grain the corn?” the farmer used to say, with a good natured smile, as he threw his coat over a pile of bagged grain, to make a seat.

“Do not stop the mill Mr. M'Donald, thank you, I will do that,” interposed Gertrude, and the noisy clatter recommenced.

The great pile of golden cobs, one by one were presented to the rough

iron wheel, and the hard grains quickly removed; this labour was not confined to the farmer, for his daughters could render him assistance in it.

The whirring and rattling of the noisy little mill had great charms for the visitors, especially as it was frequently the occupation of a wet day, when they could not walk out. Miss Markarld was utterly regardless of her hostess's alarm, as she spread an umbrella and stepped out on to the wet ground, "she was going to see the mill" was her only reply, as she picked her steps through the muddy yard, Gertrude dutifully following.

But these amusements were abruptly terminated, by Mr. Markarld's appearance among them—he had come to fetch his daughter home.

"I approve of your care Mrs. M'Donald," he said in a grandly condescending tone. "Miss Markarld is decidedly better."

Mrs. M'Donald was evidently rather gratified, by the consciousness that she was so, than by his manner of acknowledging it; but she was a kind hearted woman, not disposed to be fastidious about styles.

The packing and bustle of the sea voyage had to be reenacted, with a host of poultry and a chorus of melancholy pigs, and calves, destined for the Sydney market, adding a pitiable increase to the voyagers.

Mr. Markarld sat in the cabin sipping brandy and water, and talking politics with a stout passenger; and his daughter retired to the ladies' saloon, prepared to be unwell, and irritably sensible of the presence of a crying child, and a group of fellow sufferers. Gertrude could hear cheerful voices on deck, persons who were going home; others who were anticipating a shopping, or visiting week; pleasures past, and to come, discussed with smiles of gratified remembrance—it made her remember how lonely she was; that she had no home to go to: no loving circle to amuse with the recounting of her adventures: she thought with some dread of the dull garret room—but these dissatisfied feelings were not of long continuance; she could at least make others happy, and find her own happiness in that: it was a resolve well carried out, and it lessened that sense of loneliness; it is impossible to bestow pleasure, without receiving it; she went to her German bible again, and it said to her, "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

The return to the Park renewed Gertrude's former mode of life, with this slight modification, that occasionally Miss Markarld sent for her to read aloud to her, as she reclined on a couch, weary and feverish, for her temporary amendment of health had given way, and she was perhaps more decidedly an invalid, than previously.

These were pleasant hours to Gertrude, and made her acquainted with many works, before unknown to her. Miss Markarld had naturally a strong mind, and perhaps her view of life taken from a sick room, was rather

acidulated; she therefore found no pleasure in society, but made her world in books: *here* were friends whom time changes not;—beings, and flowers, from which the hand of death needs turn away, for it is powerless—her library was varied; travels and exploratory narratives occupied the first place, then poetry and fiction, and there were times when the bible, and works on sacred subjects met with attention; but the sick girl belonged to a family who had placed the respectabilities of life in the room of religion; and these authorities taught her that far above all these things stood Christ the Lord; it disturbed her complacency, and she was unwilling to be humbled; even as a mere nothing before Him; so those better themes were often put aside; but Mr. M'Donald's evensong of praise was not forgotten, and when the rich rays of the setting sun were flooding in at the open window, and the pensive hush of evening had fallen upon the Park, she would request Gertrude to sing a hymn, and with her head rested on her white slender hand, she listened in silence and longed—she could not define for what, but the unsatisfied spirit had no resting place.

Chapter XXIX.

And though these scenes may seem to careless eyes,
Irregular and rough and unconverted,

* * * * *

And in primeval mystery, still in use,
A meaning, and a purpose may be marked,
Among them, of a temple reared to God.

P.J. BAILEY.

Friendship hath pass'd me like a ship at sea.

FESTUS.

“CAN I see the Missus?” The speaker was an old woman, and she had addressed Gertrude.

“Mrs. Markarld is in Sydney.”

“Then the Master.”

“I am afraid not; he is in his study, and he never sees people upon business after dinner.”

“But I must see him or her.” The tones were so passionate that Gertrude paused, and enquired if anything had occurred.

“Oh! yes young lady, my son's in trouble, and what shall I do, at all, at all.”

“Do not fret, I will speak to Miss Markarld,” she returned kindly, for the woman had commenced sobbing with violence.

“Yes, any of them,” she exclaimed eagerly.

Gertrude withdrew to the little room opening with glass doors into the garden, where the invalid usually sat.

“I can't be troubled,” she said, when Gertrude delivered her message.

“The poor old woman seems in great distress,” the girl ventured to plead.

“Well, yes, you may tell her to come in.” The woman's tale was rather incoherent, and prolix.

“Do I understand that your son has killed this man who claims his wheat field?”

“No, no Miss, he an't killed—the murdered man an't dead, he's only hurted.”

“And what do you expect me to do?”

“Dear miss you can do everything, if the master, God bless him, would not commit my boy.”

“But he won't be the only magistrate.”

“His influence is everythin,” urged the mother.

Miss Markarld's family pride was at stake, and she promised to speak about it, and with many protestations of everlasting gratitude, the petitioner withdrew.

Miss Markarld sought her father immediately, and aroused him from a sleep, which circumstance did not tend to lessen his displeasure: “the young man” he said “deserved all that might befall him; he was always quarrelling with his neighbour, about their boundaries; and if he would impress his assertions with a cudgel, he must suffer the penalty of the law.”

His daughter was not disposed to take this view of the subject, her sympathy had been awakened by the distress of the mother; a distress augmented by the consideration that she was entirely dependent for subsistence, upon the labours of this only child; and she could not work she had said, extending her yellow trembling hands.

The agitation reduced Miss Markarld to the sofa, and Gertrude became her nurse.

“I wish you would go and see that poor creature, and take her something: she may be in distress,” remarked Miss Markarld. Gertrude expressed her willingness to be her alms bearer; and a large basket was filled with clothing, and provisions, and one of the female domestics appointed to accompany her; for the distance was long and solitary.

There are few objects less pleasing than a log hut, erected in the midst of a field, or two, and bordered round with slanting trees, many of them killed, to lessen their shades; no garden, scarcely an out-house, it was just one of the extremes of these cases where the widow lived; within and without “it would do as a make-shift”—appeared to be the received maxim. The log walls did without plaster, and the cracks were stuffed with straw and rags; the wooden shutters occupied the place of glass, and the earth spread over with ashes, did for a floor.

They found the old woman crouched down by an expiring fire, groaning and rocking herself; she was quite alone, and very miserable.

Gertrude had naturally a peculiarly soft and pleasing voice, a tone which bespoke her truly feminine character, and modulated by sympathy, her words sounded to the lonely mourner, like the whisperings of Angels: she bade her hope, and pointed her to a higher than earthly hope; and when she said good bye, she was looking less disconsolate.

The matter terminated as such cases frequently do: the transfer of a couple of fat pigs from the injurer's sty, to the yard of his neighbour,

wonderfully lessened his wounds; and he began to remember that he had certainly been in fault; so venial had the offence become, that a fine was quite adequate to it, and the old widow received her penitent with rapturous joy. Miss Markarld however was not satisfied; she did not know, but suspected the truth; she would have had mercy stretched to any lengths, but falsehood and bribery displeased her—she had felt her kindly sympathy meritorious, and this humbled her. That evening Gertrude read to her from the Bible, and she saw a tear glisten on her cheek as she read.

“And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name and I shall say: It is my people: and they shall hear them: I will say, The Lord is my God.”

“These people,” she said after a pause pursuing her reflections aloud: “I meant to do them good. I have perhaps; but such things disgust me—however, they are not worth thinking about”—with this consideration she was just dismissing the subject, when the servant entered to say, a young man wanted to see Gertrude.

“Are you sure it was me?” inquired she, in some surprise.

“Yes. ‘Miss Gonthier,’ he said.”

“Send him in,” said Miss Markarld lifting her head from the pillow.

“The door opened, and Mr. Ben appeared, Gertrude bowed, and briefly explained who he was. Mr. Ben was evidently gratified at the distinction of being introduced into Miss Markarld's own parlour, and crossed the room on the tips of his toes, with a movement of the head like a crane drinking: and fell into a chair, dashing his hat beneath it.

“Did you wish to see me?” Gertrude enquired when all suitable sanitary particulars had been dwelt upon.

The visitor drew a three-cornered note from his pocket, and presented it with a low bow. It was from his aunt.

“Will you say that I am much obliged, but shall not be able to come,” she said. The note contained a tea-drinking invitation.

Mr. Ben was in no humour to go. Gertrude sat in trembling anxiety, as he chatted, and laughed alternately, with Miss Markarld and herself; only wondering that the young lady did not exhibit that haughty demeanour she frequently assumed; at length Gertrude ventured to hint that Miss Markarld was so unwell, she would be fatigued; and unwillingly the elated poet departed. Always afterwards, he used to speak of his “friend Miss Markarld,” and when he was “spending the evening at Markarld Park;” it was capital, from which he drew small change, for a considerable time.

“What an extraordinary creature,” remarked the invalid, sinking back upon the pillows, when the door closed upon their visitor. “Who did you

say he was.”

Gertrude again explained; this time more fully, “with what a flourish he left the room.” Miss Markarld said with a merry laugh, it was contagious, and Gertrude joined her.

“He has disturbed our reading, and it is now late; but Gertrude, I think I shall get papa to let me go to the Shoalhaven again, we were very happy there. I have been worse ever since we returned. I know that I shall die soon,” she burst into tears, and wept bitterly.

It was indeed too true in all probability; her mother and sister were still absent, but Dr. Norris strengthened by her wishes, decided her immediate departure, and Gertrude again left the Park, as her attendant.

That second visit was very different to the former one; no more riding, and boating; she had not strength for it.

Mrs. M'Donald piled up a large arm-chair with pillows, and she was laid among these, Gertrude always near her—every one felt for the sick girl. Jean M'Donald would leave the yard to carry her a mug of warm milk; and the younger children hushed their noisy plays; their mother was a treasure to Gertrude, she could not have done without her.

One bright evening they sat watching the cows returning from their pasturage, to the milking-bails, when David presented himself, loaded with ferns, and branches.

“Why Dav,” ejaculated his mother, whose presence there, was accounted for by the basin of broth she held in her hand.

“I brought these bushes miss from the gullies you used to go to see—I thought you might like them.”

Miss Markarld was delighted. “We'll go up there again soon David—I am much better; the very things I am so fond of; you really are a good boy.”

David appeared perfectly satisfied, and retired. The invalid had the branches twisted about the verandah, and the boy took care she should never want fresh ones.

Miss Markarld was much more amiable than formerly, though still extremely irritable; and Gertrude's task was a difficult one, but she had higher than human help, and that supported her.

“You must be well in time to see the blacks' stockyard,” remarked Mrs. M'Donald.

“What is that?”

“They make a bridge across the stream—a sort of dam, with branches; and stop the fish as they are returning to the sea—my gude man will take you up in the boat, to see them.”

“The fish ascend the river to spawn, I suppose.”

“Yes. There are a good many taken—if the blacks were only provident, and salted them, but pure souls they have no-where to store them. But Miss Gertrude ye'll just tak the broth, for I maun gang to the butter.”

This stock-yarding of fish promised to be something new, and to the mutual satisfaction of all parties, Miss Markarld was able to ascend the river in the boat, to where the embankment was erected.

The moon shot out from behind a branch of dark clouds, that now as she rose above them, turned to a pure silvery grey; the high points of the mountains stood out in grand and bold relief against the sky; the vales retired into the deepest shade, and the more prominent parts assumed the shape of turrets of silver—every little wave was dancing in light around the boat. On either side of the river, rose the high Swamp oaks, casting a profound shadow at their feet; and the sighing of the wind through their foliage, sounded as if this shade-mantle were rustling in its fall from their high shoulders. Loud and clear the blue pigeon cooed, and the wild cattle lowed, on the mountain side.

Mr. M'Donald was a powerful man, and the boat sped on rapidly; as they proceeded they caught the distant sound of native voices; those clear wild yells in which nature's children delight—now a shriek of young creatures sporting, then a laugh, or a prolonged “coo—e,” reverberating from height to height: then there was the light of distant fires, shooting up as a fresh supply of dry flood-drift, or bark, was thrown on the embers.

“Mr. M'Donald,” whispered Miss Markarld in an alarmed tone.

“What is it Miss—are ye no weel?”

“Quite well—but is it safe?”

“The water is deep here, there's no fear. David you'n no pulling fair my laddie.”

“I am not afraid of the water, it is the blacks.”

Mr. M'Donald assured her there was no danger, and that he had sent word that they were coming, by some “gins” who had been at the farm that day; in order that the natives might be prepared for them.

Notwithstanding this assurance, and the stalwart arms of the farmer and his son, both females were trembling; the scene was so very wild; and as they approached the “stock-yard” they could distinguish the dark figures gliding among the trees, now lifting the fish from the glowing embers, now casting on a fresh supply, as those in the enclosure cast them on shore.

The farmer raised his voice in a loud shout, which was replied to by numerous voices, and presently the boat shot into the light of the fires, and her crew landed: all the natives were now on shore, some already Boa-constrictor like, had fallen asleep after their feast; others, yet surrounded the fires.

Piles of fish lay ready for use; heads, fins, and tails, were scattered round. A very Babel of tongues broke the forest's slumbers; women talked, and scolded; and children romped, and cried.

The visitors did not stay long, they had a long distance to return home; and the farmer was fearful that his delicate guest would suffer from the evening air; though she was enveloped in shawls and rugs.

The fishing and feasting might last for several days; the natives from some distance were assembled, and altogether it was a nearer approach to the days antecedent of the Europeans, than any thing the party had previously witnessed in Australia.

“Mr. M'Donald, can you sing and row?” Miss Markarld inquired.

“Weel Miss, praying dinna hinder working, not singing either.”

“Then will you sing a hymn?”

The farmer struck up a psalm, and David joined in; and so they proceeded homewards; and were in the very best of moods, to appreciate Mrs. M'Donald's hot oatmeal porridge, after their aquatic excursion.

Every member of this homely family appeared united and happy, in spite of hard work, (and bush settlers do work *very* hard,) and many cares; for M'Donald had often to think how to make pence into pounds; and his wife had not parted with two from her little flock, without many bitter tears; and even now those treasured memories were ever with her; yet they were evidently a happy family, and none could mistake the source of this content. It did Miss Markarld much good to be among them.

“They that honor me I will honor,” it is written, and we find it so—how different are the pious, to the irreligious poor; and through every station it is so.

But once again they were to return to the Park. Mr. Markarld's second daughter was about to be married, and her sister must be present at her nuptials. This young lady was so frequently from home, as to scarcely appear to be a member of the family; she rather visited at the Park, than lived there.

The whole establishment was in a state of confusion. Gertrude's services were imperatively required; and so limited was the time, and so much to be done, that leisure moments were at an end. Owing to her absence and incessant occupations, she had not been into town, nor heard from her friends there, since Mr. Ben's visit; she knew that Dr. Jejeware was practising at some locality some miles distant.

Often as she sat working through the long evening hours, her thoughts reverted to her life at Murrumbowrie, and the friends she had loved so fondly there; none since could take their places, she did not wish it, she guarded their memories with a jealous care, which would permit of no

intrusion; and who could supplant them? No one, she returned proudly, she had found no second Mr. Tudor, and she did not expect to do so; indeed she would not have allowed that any one was equal to him—if she were in any trouble, he was ready and able to help her, if she wanted information, he would give it so clearly and simply, that she understood it directly. No, there was certainly no one like him, and then in the midst of her pride and satisfaction at this reflection, a tear would course down her cheek, to think she should see him no more. She had other sources of sorrow at this time; Miss Markarld would leave home with her sister; they were going to a neighbouring colony, and the change of climate was to be tried for her health. She was the only member of the family who treated Gertrude with affection; their wanderings together, had produced an almost friendly feeling, and the young girl's tears flowed, as she bid the sisters farewell.

Once again she retired to her garret work-room, and cheered her solitude by occasionally inviting the gardener's little Maggie to come and play with her; and again, the long looked for treat, was the hurried walk in to see Miss Lenny and her other friends. Still she heard nothing of Kitty Kenlow, who had taken the place of a connecting link between the past and the present; she could not bear to think that tie was severed, and she, cast indeed alone upon the world; and yet not alone, for He has said, "Lo! I am with you alway." She held to these promises, and preserved as much cheerfulness as possible. Although her duties as nurse had been fatiguing, it had been a happiness to feel some one dependent on her, some one to whom her presence was essential; now it was so to no one.

Gertrude was just endeavouring to erase Mr. Ben's last attempts at versification, when her door opened, and the gardener's wife looked in.

"Have you my little Maggie Miss Gonthy," she enquired hurriedly.

"No I have not had her up here to-day, I am so very busy."

"Where can she be," the mother said, and Gertrude echoed "where can she be?" Both ran down stairs, and searched the cottage, the garden, and the deep pond among the fruit trees; but it was not in any of these places; and the mother in her alarm, shrieked aloud till the whole Park rang with the name of her child.

Mr. Markarld dreadfully shocked, and indignant at such a low tavern-like sound, rushed out of his study, where, however, he never studied, and Mrs. Markarld appeared pale and nervous, and the young ladies and young gentlemen in their several degrees of horror, at such an unwonted liberty.

"I tell you my child's lost; it's gone, gone," repeated the woman with a haggard and startled air.

Gertrude was more collected, and explained the case; and the search recommenced. Night set in, while they were unsuccessful. Oh! the agony of

those long hours of darkness, men carrying lanterns were hurrying hither, and thither, and horsemen scoured the country for miles; for the received opinion was, that the child had wandered a long distance. "They will," said a woman to Gertrude, "my Willie followed the road to town, a good mile, or more—and this blessed babe is gone, the Lord only knows where."

"But it can hardly walk."

"They do crawl on wonderfully. I knew a child—" but her account was cut short by another woman eager to unfold her store of reminiscences; Gertrude broke away in the midst, and ran on; frequently some of the seekers met her with an anxious enquiry if it were found; but the sad response ever was in the negative. At length morning dawned, and with renewed energy the search was prosecuted, every one examined where another had preceded them, the house and garden were deserted; for as the day advanced, the circle spread, and scattered to a distance, that would rather seem the range of a race-horse, than a baby; for fleet indeed must have been her steps, if she had wandered so far in that time; that the babe could scarcely walk, only served to perplex them, and the parents conceived the idea that their treasure was stolen. There had been a few aboriginal women about the Park the previous day begging, and the mother, perhaps with the prejudice to colour so common, cast the stigma upon them.

"Where are they encamped?" was asked, and the reply was, about two miles distant.

"Shall we go there?" Gertrude asked.

"Yes, yes," eagerly ejaculated the mother; and they turned their steps in the direction indicated—several women joined them; though all but the mother were convinced of the innocence of the natives.

"Our blacks never do such things," said a young Australian woman, with a confident air.

"I don't like them blacks, they are always treacherous, and my Maggie was such a beauty."

The encampment was reached at length—a few branches supported by forked sticks, were the only covering from sun, or rain, that they had erected—as is usual in the day, the camps were nearly deserted; all being abroad hunting, or begging—a few lean dogs ran out of the tents, barking vociferously; and then a sable face or two, peered from under blankets by no means fastidiously clean, or opossum skin cloaks, and then there was a brisk clamour of voices.

"Hi you Misses, you bin come from Mr. Markarld's," said one. "Misses poor old man this Misses: him berry bad," pleaded another. The latter words were addressed to Gertrude by an aged woman, shrivelled and care-

worn, till she looked like a mummy.

“Is he ill?” she inquired, advancing.

Upon a tattered blanket was extended an infirm, and evidently dying man. A little fire was burning near him, and the black tin can of tea simmered by it—he turned his large dark eyes upon her, with a look which awakened her deepest pity.

“Are you in pain?” she inquired feelingly.

He did not speak, but the aged partner of his life whispered to her, “I believe him tumble down Misses.”

Gertrude understood the peculiar mode the aborigines have adopted of indicating death; and she knew that it was pre-eminently distressing and shocking to them, to mention death, or the dead by name, or in a direct manner—she could only say “she hoped not,” and bid the woman come to the Park, and she would request Mrs. Markarld to give her some food for him.

The propensity of gossiping and news-carrying, is fully developed in the colored native population of Australia. They wander from house to house gathering, and keenly observing the most trifling word, or circumstance; and then around the evening fire detail their gleanings of information, for the general edification, and amusement. The loss of the child had reached the encampment, and several of the party were engaged in the search—the manner of the few women they encountered was perfectly truthful; and even the mother admitted, that theirs could not be the cruel hands which had torn her child from her.

They had to return with the hopes that the babe had been found during their absence, but this hope was dissipated as they approached the Park, and met others like themselves unsuccessful.

Gertrude again returned to the gardener's dwelling, which had been deserted at the first alarm. It was a weather-board cottage, raised on blocks of wood, about two or three feet in height; it had been banked round with stones and earth, excepting in one place, where a stone had given way; it was a small hole, but large enough to admit a slender body with difficulty. Could the child be in there? under the cottage in that low dark cellar? she would try. “But there may be rats there,” urged one. “And perhaps the air's bad,” added another; for several prevented by fatigue from further walking, had returned with her. No matter, she would try. They brought her a lighted candle, and after some difficulty she entered, holding the light before her, and crawling among, and behind the blocks supporting the division walls, was lost to the sight of the eager heads filling the small aperture, to the perfect exclusion of air.

With a prayer for help, she groped along; but presently, accidentally struck

her candle against a post, and extinguished it, and was left in total darkness; but not till she had seen the object of her search, and raising it in her arms, she crept back, till the glad sight of a feeble ray streaming in as one head was moved, to give place to another, guided her to the entrance, and she uttered an entreaty for air. The babe was saved; it was weak with uttering cries, which had reached no human ears, for they who sought it so distractedly, were far from it, and with hunger, for it was late in the afternoon of the previous day, that it had been lost. When Gertrude gained the free air and sunshine, she fainted, and revived in a very exhausted state: while she lay ill, however, Mr. Ben took the opportunity of appearing before the public, in the character of a contributor to one of the papers, and penned a florid account of the affair; liberally throwing in such additions as added piquancy to the details; he dwelt upon the heroism, unparalleled bravery of the lonely girl; and added the full horrors of this second Black Hole; the rats and poisonous vapours; and described the fair skin blackened by dust, and the final fainting, the illness, themes admirably treated, and followed by a poem of forty-eight, four-lined verses; which that "heathen of an editor" entirely omitted; and Mr. Ben and his friends felt convinced from that circumstance, that much valuable information that would elevate the minds of the people, was kept from them by *that* man.

Others beside Mr. Ben praised Gertrude; indeed Doctor Norris, who, after being called in to prescribe for the child, had to attend to her, was so lavish of his praise, that Mr. Markarld began to feel uncomfortable; it seemed to abridge his dignity, to have this pale-faced sempstress made so much of; it almost reflected upon the exertions of others in the cause; he was not in the habit of being at variance with self-love, and he grew restive, and intimated to Mrs. Markarld, that she must part with that girl, for she was set quite above herself.

"But she is such a useful person, I never had any one do so much work," pleaded his spouse.

"She must go if you please Mrs. M."

The loud tones as usual silenced all further opposition. Gertrude however was ill, and could not be moved; but she was informed that her services would not be required after a certain time. Why? she wondered, for the action that she had performed, was in her own eyes without merit, and only to be rejoiced in from its results—little Maggie was rapidly recovering; this was a rich reward, it compensated for anything she had suffered.

Chapter XXX.

I am bound to thee for ever
By the pleasure of this day.

FESTUS.

MRS. Markarld and several members of her family were not a little surprised, as they started on an equestrian trip one day, to find a tall gentlemanly person leaning over the gate. He drew aside politely, and opened it; and addressing one of the boys, enquired if “that road led to Mr. Markarld's house.”

“This is Markarld Park,” returned the young gentleman awfully.

The stranger did not appear overcome by the announcement, but closing the gate proceeded up the road with such a firm step, and erect carriage, that the party paused to watch his receding figure, till a turn in the way concealed him from their sight. Not less was the servant impressed with his manner; and she was leading the way to the drawing-room, when his enquiry for Miss Gonthier, altered her course.

Gertrude was still pale and delicate looking; she was very busy, for Mrs. Markarld had supplied her with a great quantity of work, which was to be done prior to her leaving. She looked up from behind a pile of calico and gingham as the door opened, but the languid air was quickly supplanted by a look of delight. “Mr. Tudor!” “Gertrude!” were the mutual exclamations; and her hand was taken in a strong friendly clasp.

“How—When did you come here?” Her colour was coming and going, and he led her to a seat, casting a glance upon the gaping attendant, which induced her to close the door, and gratify her visual organs by means of the keyhole.

“I have come, Gertrude, to see you.”

“Have you! how did you know where I was?”

“I saw an article in the paper.”

“About me?”

“Yes. I was much gratified,” and he looked approvingly at her. “I have much to say; and indeed Miss Gertrude, I hardly know how to explain to you what I would say. I have found of late, that I have been *very* proud.”

“Oh no.”

“Yes, very—you must permit me to blame myself severely; it has been my only comfort of late.”

“A poor one,” she returned smiling.

“I have been blinded by pride; those who walk on stilts, are less likely to see the surface of the earth clearly, than those nearer it. I am afraid I have been using the stilts.”

She smiled; and then with sudden revolution of feeling burst into tears, saying—

“We have not met since the sad event, which scattered us all—our dear Mrs. Doherty. Who could have murdered her? Oh Mr. Tudor, if you had been there.”

“I fear Gertrude, it would have been the same.” A long and painful silence followed: she wondered why he grew so pale; and his brows worked so uneasily. At length he said—

“You know nothing more than what occurred at the time.”

“Nothing, do you?”

“I do! I know much that will, I fear, deeply pain you; I would give anything to spare you, but it might reach you for the first time, through rude and unsympathizing sources. Gertrude, the hand which deprived our dear friend of life, was not wilfully raised to murder her. It was a passionate impulse awakened by a dispute about various matters, where each felt aggrieved; and that deed has been truly repented of, and I trust pardoned”—he lingered; his tongue refused to utter the name of the murderer.

“Tell me, who, I must know,” she sprang up, her cheek white, her eyes wild.

“You shall, it was, Charles Inkersole.”

There was a long pause, Gertrude had fallen into the chair, and her face was buried in her hands; but her deep sobs told him of her distress, and wrung his very heart; when she was calmer, he talked to her as he used to do, quietly, and firmly; he spoke to her as a Christian, he dwelt on the hopes of forgiveness; he repeated to her the conversations he had had with the clergyman who first acquainted him with Charley's crime and death.

That the unhappy man was dead, was evidently a relief to her; he was spared from ignominiously bearing the punishment the laws of his country demanded for his crime; and the sensations of horror gave way to pity, and even hope. Tudor had delicately concealed from her the actual cause of dispute; and she was saved that additional suffering. There was much to say, and to hear, when the first poignant emotions were subdued.

Gertrude was to have left in a month. “Would you like to leave now?” Tudor enquired.

“Oh yes: but I cannot.”

“Will you allow me to try?”

A grateful smile answered him. She was so happy to have some one to

act for her. Yes, he was now to be her guide and protector; she knew why he had apparently neglected her; but all was now explained: she was quite bewildered, when he left her to arrange with Mr. Markarld for her immediate departure—she sat trying to collect her thoughts, but she could not for the present; there was nothing but a delicious consciousness of affection and power, which was exerted for her; and a grateful sense of God's blessings. He had done more than she ever dared to hope, or expect: the time was not come to steadily consider the duties which lay before her; for the events of the last hour, or two, were almost stupifying in their abruptness; but earnestly she prayed that she might choose rightly; and that her light might so shine that others should be attracted to that Source of Light; even Christ—for the rest she added, “Thy will be done.”

Just as years before, Tudor had entered upon his situation at Murrumbowrie, and bowed every will to his, so now he carried his point; he was so courteous, yet immoveable, that it did not suggest itself to oppose him: he evidently meant to succeed; but his bearing was so gentlemanly, that the favor must necessarily be yielded gracefully. Mr. Markarld deprived of his arrogant bearing looked awkward and uncertain: he had wine and biscuits brought into the drawing-room, but a consciousness that the Miss Gonthier in question, was only a needle-woman, perplexed him.

A short time more, and Gertrude had left the Park for ever; she was shedding tears of mingled emotions, which it took long to analyse: the scrutiny had to be waived for the present: there were friends to bid farewell to, and hasty preparation for a journey to be made. Miss Lenny was intending to visit her mother, and would accompany them.

“I'll take her under my charge to mother's sir,” said she.

Tudor thanked her.

“What a beautiful manner he has,” whispered Miss Turkinton to Gertrude, as she stood gazing in admiring wonder at the stranger. “I wonder you never told us.”

Gertrude thought how little, and yet how much she had had to tell: but she was saved a reply by Tudor's warmly thanking Miss Lenny for her kindness to Gertrude; and then turning with an acknowledging smile and bow, towards the beauty.

“I'm sure Mr. Tudor, I am very happy to do anything for Gertrude. I always was very partial to her, from the first.”

No one was inclined to question her veracity just then; and the females fell into a state of happy confusion, packing and unpacking, providing for the safety of best bonnets, choosing travelling costumes, and the other matters so important to woman-kind.

Miss Turkinton was actually aroused out of her dormant state, she was even seen to run in Gertrude's service: and the epithets "dear," and "love," were always coupled with her name; Miss Lenny's kindness was less demonstrative, and Gertrude felt more sincere; but she was in no humour to cavil; and she had Miss Watchorn to bid adieu to, and the little doctor; altogether it was a relief to find herself at Mrs. Lenny's. Julia was enchanted, and must express her pleasurable sensations in a dance.

"And how long will you stay—and when will you be married?"—

"I do not know. Mr. Tudor is going to his mother's; and he will return with his sister, for me."

"What a love he is, Gertrude."

Gertrude laughed at the idea; it sounded rather weak for such a grave, strong-minded person. The meeting with his mother and sisters alarmed her: if they were like him she would appear so childish and feeble to them; they would find so many faults in her; she feared she was not worthy of their son and brother—her head bowed down upon her hand, and the tears filled her eyes. A moment afterwards, there was a hand laid firmly on her shoulder; the touch conveyed sympathy, and courage—it made her tears flow faster.

"Gertrude will you not bid me good-bye?" he said in a low tone.

"Are you going?—surely you will not go so soon."

"Yes I must start to-night—my absence will be very short—then in a tone which only reached her ears, he added, "I wish to take you from here; you will be happier with my mother and family dear Gertrude: these people mean well, and are really kind, but they will wound you at every turn."

"They do."

"I know it. All will love you at Riverside."

"I am afraid"—

"What of?"—she had paused, and looked reluctant to complete her sentence; but Tudor stood waiting for it.

"I am afraid they will think me so childish, I have so many faults."

"Is that all—we will compound with that," he returned with a merry smile; and then gently, "they are not perfect either; at first they will love you for my sake, and then for your own—my mother is the kindest, and most affectionate of women; and I am sure the girls will be really sisters to you," again his hand was laid firmly on her shoulder, and then he departed.

"Law what a pity! I thought Mr. Tudor would have stayed the evening; and we could have had a nice dance. I was just going to run in next door, and get them to come in after tea."

Gertrude was trying to appear composed, but she made an effort to console Julia Lenny, and consoled herself at the same time. There was

shopping to do, but she was too tired that day to trouble about muslin and laces; and the evening was passed in thinking of that family party at Riverside Farm; and in listening to Julia's musical performances. It is to be feared that "the last new song," and "such a pretty polka," were equally disregarded—she was tracing Tudor along the road; wondering if he would travel all night; and fearing he would, for he never seemed to feel fatigue; and he was just like he used to be, only kinder; and she admitted it now, he was formerly a *little* stern in his bearing. Charles Inkersole and his crime, reverted frequently to her remembrance; but she dared not dwell on it: happily Mrs. Lenny and her daughters were so absorbed in the surprise the appearance of Mr. Tudor, and her change of fortune had given them, that Mrs. Doherty's death was over-looked. Gertrude felt she could not have borne that: she could scarcely command her feelings, when Mrs. Lenny sunk into her arm chair, and drawing a footstool towards her, planted her carpet slippers thereupon, and requested Gertrude to tell her "all the particulars."

The request was clearly not to be evaded, the attitude indicated that she was prepared to listen, and expected a narrative of some length. Gertrude was utterly at fault, and stammered out "that Mr. Tudor was always very kind to her, but he was not at home when"—a flood of tears finished the sentence, and as she abruptly left the room, she caught Mrs. Lenny wondering—"My word, who'd have thought she would have took it that way."

Whatever way she was expected to take it, she evidently could not recover her composure sufficiently that evening, to bear any further questioning; and she mentally applauded Tudor's idea of removing her immediately. "He was quite right, he always is," was the satisfactory conclusion, and an early bed her safest retreat.

The sea breeze was blowing fresh and cool, when Gertrude and Julia Lenny a few days later, strolled through the Botanic Gardens, and seeking a shaded seat prepared to enjoy the scene, the blue waters of the harbour lay calm, and bright, before them, slightly lined by the white crests of the waves formed by the wind; boats with their curious wings spread, glided along, and a large vessel laden with some hundreds of emigrants, was sailing slowly towards her long coveted haven; Gertrude had too recently left her native land, and made one of such a crew, not to enter keenly into the emotions which must have stirred those many bosoms, as they turned their gaze on their future land, where they might expect to live and die; for how few, if any, of those three hundred Emigrants would leave that land again. For herself she adopted the words, "the lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places, and thou hast given me a goodly heritage;" most earnestly

she desired that her earthly happiness might not weaken her love for God. "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only," she said with David.

"Gertrude, an't that Mr. Tudor and a lady?" exclaimed Julia, whose eyes had found more to attract them in the persons roaming through the gardens, than in an emigrant ship. The question made her start. It *was* Tudor and a lady, his sister, she knew in a moment; there were the same fine features, and thoughtful eyes. She advanced quietly, with burning cheeks; but the welcoming smile, and the "dear Gertrude, I am so glad to see you," uttered in a sincere earnest tone, dissipated her fears. Tudor looked on with a satisfied smile; he had selected his elder sister, because she was less mirthful than Fanny, and he knew that Gertrude's spirits were not equal to mirth just then.

"Our mother is all impatience to have you at home Gertrude dear," said Annie Tudor.

How those words "our mother," and "home," echoed in her heart: she who had been for years motherless and homeless, was suddenly restored to all these ties.

"I am ready," she returned in a very low tone, but her companions understood the depth of emotion which absolutely hushed its expression, by its very intensity.

Julia Lenny was now formally introduced to Miss Tudor, and gracefully thanked for the care she had taken of their dear Gertrude.

"I am sure I don't know who would'nt be kind to her; they can't well help it," returned she; her natural good feelings surmounting the icy restraint her gentility habitually put upon her. "Shall we return home now Miss Tudor? Ma will be proud to make your acquaintance."

"And I shall have much gratification in personally thanking her; but my brother and I are going to stay at an hotel, and we will take Gertrude if she would wish it, with us."

Gertrude's wishes were legibly inscribed upon her countenance, and when Mrs. Lenny had been called on, and the favours she had extended to Gertrude acknowledged gratefully, they withdrew to the hotel.

That happy evening, it would never be forgotten, it was one of the stars in life's sky; it disarmed the fear Gertrude had felt at the thoughts of meeting the family at Riverside; she felt she already knew and loved them; and that she was no stranger there; that she was indeed going *home*: she could even feel that their separation had been a blessing, her mind and character were matured, her Christian faith increased, and she was now fitted to enter upon the duties of life, in a very different manner to what she could formerly have done. With what confidence may we not utter "our

Father which art in heaven,” for the hand which rules our destiny is indeed paternal, and unerring in wisdom; with truth has it been said, “it is often darkest before the break of day;” let us believe it in our hours of sorrow, that which we have pronounced impossible, is possible with Him. To Gertrude the future was a happy uncertainty, which she cared not to lift the veil from, even if she could have done so.

Their stay in Sydney was short, and the way to the Nepean soon traversed. They had left the high road, and by one of those uneven, rutty, and root-crossed tracks, known as “bush roads,” were penetrating a part of the country before unknown to her—it was level, and wooded, chiefly by the Blue Gum and Oak; and the wind as it sighed softly through the wiry leaves of the latter trees, sounded a pleasant welcome to her—it was pre-eminently a farming district: now they skirted wide fields under good culture; then were detained for a few moments by some friendly recognition from a farmer, busy among his hay stacks, or appearing flail in hand, from a huge barn door; all knew, and were glad to see Mr. Tudor; some had a word of greeting for Miss Annie. Gertrude was not displeased that only a “fine day miss,” was bestowed upon her. These rural scenes deeply interested her, it was the day on which the farmers left home for the hay market; and from every stack yard turned out a dray, piled with hay, or straw, each driver had a word for Tudor; some were unmistakably Australians; the tall thin figures, the straight features, and national expression: again she heard the prices current discussed with interest, and probable fluctuations of the markets speculated upon; it carried her in imagination back to Murrumbowrie; sometimes the loads consisted of fat calves in frame pens, or poultry, lamenting their approaching fate, in tones varying from the gobble of a fat turkey, to the shrill clatter of a ruffled hen.

The scenery was not striking, but pleasing, to the lover of the country and of improvement. That it reminds of “Home” is the British meed of praise, which, perhaps can hardly be improved upon—since it suggests a well-tilled field: a comfortable farm-house, among its orchard trees; and a great barn stored with good things.

After a while they drew up at one of these farms—the dwelling and flower garden evinced the presence of a cultivated taste, the river between its deep banks, flowed near.

“Is this your mother's place?” Gertrude enquired, with a fluttering heart.

Tudor's smile answered her. She was glad he did not speak, for his smile conveyed more than words could, and then she was clasped in the warm embrace, of one of those gentle, large-hearted women, who seem born to be comforters, and to share and remove all sorrows if it be possible to do it.

Kenneth was from home for a few days; but had left a kind message with

Fanny for her. Some little evidence of affectionate expectation met her at every step, it unnerved her completely, and she sat down and wept.

“She is timid and strange,” said Fanny sympathizingly, “but dear Gertrude we all love you: you must not be lonely among us.”

Tudor understood the case better; he drew her hand through his arm, and wrapping a light mantle around the slight bowed form, led her from the room; for awhile they paced the garden walks in silence, her tears flowed till they had spent themselves; and then he began to speak; he knew she would be better for allowing her long pent up emotion to find vent. There were no more tears that evening, the little face looked cheerful, if quiet; and the family party were very happy.

In viewing the future, Gertrude did not fall into the common fault, of expecting an utter cessation of all trials and sorrows for the time to come; but left their distributing to her God: she looked hopefully and firmly forward, and she would be by the side of him she loved in life's battle, that alone would be a shield and a joy; it would turn cares into pleasures.

“Gertrude are you inclined for a walk?”

It was the following morning, and although quite early, she was out in the poultry yard with Fanny, who was eagerly explaining what fine broods of fowls, and ducks, she had reared.

“It is very early Ned,” interposed his sister, for the catalogue was by no means gone over.

“It would not be our first walk of like nature,” he returned cheerfully, leading Gertrude away: “do you remember the time we ascended the bald hill to see the sun rise?”

“Yes, well—what a fine view it was. I often admired it afterwards; but where are we going now?”

“To see an old friend of yours.”

“Of mine. I know no one here.”

They went on through a lucerne field, which was unmistakably dewy; and entered a little meadow bordering the river. The high native oak trees almost concealed the clear waters rippling above their sandy bed. There was no habitation there, but a few cattle pasturing; they paused before a little white heifer; Tudor called it, and it ran forward familiarly.

“Is it my Snow-ball—where did you get her Tudor?” inquired Gertrude, passing a caressing hand across the sleek pure sides of the animal.

“It is the calf you reared, Gertrude. I found Mr. Batally considered it his; and it looked so disconsolate wandering about uncared for, that I offered to purchase it, and did so: you know I had some cattle running there, and I brought it down with them. I intended to take it up to the Hunter some day.”

Gertrude stroked the calf with increasing pleasure; and said it was very kind—and then he made her walk quickly back, and remove her damp shoes.

After a week Tudor had to return to his farm; there were preparations to be made there, which he must personally superintend; and Gertrude exerted herself to be every thing his family could desire—the making of cakes and pies; and the fitting and sewing of dresses, were very important things, for she felt kind anxious eyes watched her capabilities; and that they were kindly partial eyes, did not lessen her desire not to disappoint them. The painful situation of a woman ignorant of her duties was happily spared her—and she felt that among a practical people, like the country population of New South Wales, she gained considerable respect; from the fact that she was not helpless. If an anxious thought crossed her mind, she rested on such words as these, “Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine,” and her fears were dissipated. “God is our refuge: a very present help in every time of trouble.”

Often did Mrs. Tudor draw the young girl to her, and talk to her of those future days, as only a mother can; and that mother a Christian; she was not dissatisfied that her son had chosen a portionless bride, for she knew that there are riches out valuing gold and silver, and “a prudent wife is from the Lord.”

Newspaper advertisements in some respects occupy the place of beacons upon a foreign shore, lighting up a small space in the surrounding darkness, warning of shoals, or telling of safe havens; so through the medium of the advertising columns was the blank silence broken, which would otherwise have rested upon some of the persons to whom her wanderings had introduced Gertrude: first was an announcement of the marriage of Peter Linken, esquire, of such an such a hill, or hollow, to ‘Miss Catherine Kenlow, only daughter of Mr. Kenlow, of Golden Acres.’

Gertrude said, Kitty had married very well, but Tudor seemed to think it sounded grandest in print. ‘The Kenlows were rather genteel, you know.’

“Quite! Edward—I wonder where Kitty has gone to.”

“I really am in perfect ignorance of Mr. Linken's locality; most probably he is a neighbour of theirs: we shall not find him on the Hunter, I dare say.”

The Gertrude Gonthier of our tale was Mrs. Tudor then; and reading the paper in her sitting-room, at Burrengumbie.

Some little time after, they saw that Mr. Batally had sequestrated his estates, the incompetent proprietor robbed on every side, and perfectly incapable of directing the men he employed, had rapidly fallen into an embarrassed state of affairs; but his creditors permitted him to retain the

homestead, with the option of redeeming it in a fixed time: whether gathering experience from past failures he would be able to do so, remained to be proved.

On Mr. Batally's sudden succession to his deceased aunt's property, his ripening friendship for the family at Wattletree Flat, had met an abrupt termination. The important question Tudor was to have solved, was not propounded when he returned to Murrumbowrie; and for a while all connection between the new proprietor and them, was at an end. Staples however, watched the tide of events, in much the same spirit as a wise old crow may be supposed to entertain, as perched upon some leafless branch, he calculates the mortal span of some jaded horse, or bullock, released from the team, and vainly endeavouring to drag its failing limbs along, to where pasture may be found. After some time Staples endeavoured to propose a partnership, in which Jimbindoon was to fall under his management; he having "just a handful of sheep above what his own run could graze convenient." The handful turned out to be a second Egyptian flight of locusts, Mr. Batally's sheep did not prosper; Staples bought them, to save him further loss, and as a run without stock could be no use for a consideration, it was thrown into the bargain. About this time Ellen complained of her piano going out of tune; through the draughts. "You will have it in mother Doherty's neat parlour yet my girl," resumed he. Staples was not in the habit of communicating his projects, or seeking advice from women, so he did not unravel the meaning of his remark.

Of the minor characters little remains to be written, for this reason, that little is known. A correspondent from one of the Victoria diggings writing to the *Argus*, mentions that M'cMasters' party were doing well; but whether it was the ex-sawyer and his good natured Mary, is undetermined—for the others we may presume they are, if living, wandering up and down these broad lands of ours, leading a life of checkered weal and woe, of good or it is to be feared preponderating evil; till at length the burden of years, and ills will bow them down into that narrow resting-place, the tomb—perhaps adding their brief record of name and death, to the "accidentally drowned," or "appalling murder"—which creates a momentary interest in the newspaper column.

By similar means, that is through the public prints, Gertrude read that Miss Lenny gratefully acknowledged the liberal patronage she had met with, and solicited a continuance of the same, for the young ladies who succeeded her in her business; she withdrawing in consequence of the failing health of her mother requiring her presence. Below was an advertisement on the same subject, signed by the Misses Turkinton and Wedlake; under which names the business would in future be carried on,

&c.

Mr. Ben it is feared has not yet met with a discerning Editor, or that attention from the world, his poetic talents entitle him to: that he is not discouraged, the postmaster affirms from the number of versified epistles which passed through his hands last Valentine's day: he may therefore be heard of among the famous in days to come; and tell his own tale of the struggles of rising genius.
