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Linton, Mrs. E. Lynn (1822-1898)

Lizzie Lorton of Greyrigg (1866)

LIZZIE LORTON OF GREYRIGG.

A Novel.

BY

E. LYNN LINTON,

AUTHOR OF “GRASP YOUR NETTLE”, “THE LAKE COUNTRY”, ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18 CATHERINE STREET,

STRAND.

1866.

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TO

MY OLD AND VALUED FRIENDS

AT KESWICK

THIS BOOK

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY THEIR TOWNSWOMAN

THE AUTHOR.

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LIZZIE LORTON OF GREYRIGG.

CHAPTER I.

LANGTHWAITE AND ITS NEW RECTOR.

IN the secluded villages of Cumberland, where the clergyman is the chief person and sometimes the only educated gentleman of the parish, the appointment of a " new parson" is the most important event that can befall the community, and his character and manner of life matters of supreme interest. Wherefore, when it became known at Langthwaite, one of the most primitive of the lake-country districts, that the new rector and his mother had actually arrived at the rectory, and that he was to give his inaugural sermon on the following Sunday, the whole place was astir, and the people were never weary of wondering what he would be like, and whether they "wad tak til him or no."

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He had not pleased them over well with his doings at the old house since his appointment. Christopher Laverack, the last incumbent, had lived there sixty years come Martinmas, and had never been known to pull down or put up, save here a slate or there a pipe when damaged too badly to hold together; and the old place had stood exactly as it had stood these hundred and twenty year-its increasing growth of ivy, and once or twice in the course of the half century a wash of white paint over the window-frames, being the only changes time or man had made. Now every thing was altered; and the new comer seemed determined not to leave a line of likeness between the present and the past. As the people said grumblingly: "Laavin days! did a body iver see t' like o' that? Gosh! they were fairlie bet when they saw t' place; for it was nae mair like t' auld hoose than chalk was like to cheese, and they were fashed noo to ken t' hin'er eend Ifrae t' for'ar ane, and t' backside frae t' froont."

And indeed great alterations had been made—quite sufficient to startle the Langthwaite mind

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into grave doubts respecting its untried pastor. The flat slated roof had been thrown up into a high sharp pitch, with gables and hanging eaves and turret-fashioned chimneys ; the old square windows flush with the outer walls-merely glazed holes to let in the light—had been transformed into deep-set latticed casements with broad stone mullions, and carved oak crockets, finials, and peaked canopies ; a pendent oriel window, looking north, had been added to the drawing-room, giving a full view of the magnificent gorge of Styebarrow Pass; the high old-fashioned grates, faced with flat brass, had been taken away, and scroll-work iron dogs for wood-fires only had been substituted in their place; the narrow dining-room had been thrown into the narrow hall-thus making one large living-room, which you might call dining-room or hall as you chose, and where the new clergyman intended to receive and entertain his parishioners as in the good old times ; the hall-door, hitherto a blistered faded pine plank with a hideous black knocker, was now of stout oak with ornamental lock and hinges and ponderous bolts, looking, said the people, like a prison-door; and,

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"Nay, what was t' mon afeered on, that he suld cane hisself in wi' sic mak?"—for the Langthwaite people, though rough, were honest, and never put up bar nor drew bolt for their own parts, but slept with "snecked" doors only ; a burglary being a thing absolutely unknown in the district. So that the rectory doors with their ornamental ironwork were looked on as a slur upon the honesty of the place, and resented accordingly.

The shallow portico, with its two whitewashed freestone pillars, Ionic, and its two whitewashed freestone pilasters, Doric, was now a " pointed" porch, both deep and wide, with oaken settles down the sides capable of holding twenty persons at the least, and designed as a free resting-place for all wayfarers, where soup and bread were to be distributed daily-almsgiving being one of the new rector's most cherished intentions ; and both hall and porch were paved with encaustic tiles, the like of which the Langthwaite people had never seen before, and the beauty of which they did not appreciate now. The garden was remodelled, and the beds were filled with flowers and flowering-bushes of unknown names and forms; while as

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for the furniture, so far as could be seen of it in the unloading, it was what Jobby Dowthwaite of Wastdale said "church-furniture like," being of pure mediaeval character, and even more outlandish than the rest.

So that the new incumbent had excited a certain amount of prejudice against himself already; and Langthwaite was not prepared to receive him with quite open arms,

still less with bended knees. He was evidently of a school too foreign and unusual for their sympathies.

Opinions were not more favourable after that first Sunday when he read himself in, and preached his initial sermon on the duty of implicit obedience to the church, administering the sacrament afterwards. All were forced to confess that his voice was as clear as a bell, and to be heard by every one in church—even by deaf old Betty Hodgin who had given up church-going these five years or more, saying, "Nay, what was t' gude on't, when she war deef as a deed cuddy? She'd been twice ivory Sunday for these sixty year, an' they mun mak that sarr;" the "they" meaning neither priest nor neighbours, but GOD.

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But on the other hand he offended the people by intoning the prayers and psalms, by wearing his red-lined Oxford hood to which they were not accustomed, by preaching in his surplice, by omitting the customary collect before the sermon and beginning with the "Nomine Dei," and by keeping them longer in church than had old Laverack. He, however, had been notorious for the rapidity with which he had got over this duty, being accustomed to say that "he would give any man up to Pontius Pilate in the Creed, and then beat him." He was called the "het-kail" priest; for he rattled over the service at such a hard gallop, and gave such short sermons—never beyond a quarter of an hour—that the "kail" had no time to cool, but was hot enough for dinner when church was over. And especially did the new comer offend his flock by the administration out of usual order of the sacrament, which, as a further offence, he called Holy Communion, and at which he wore a coloured stole that would have been an immense stumbling-block had it been seen.

But as Langthwaite had been accustomed to

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this rite only three times in the year, and therefore thought it presumptuous and irreligious on a day that was neither Christmas, nor Easter, nor yet Michaelmas-time, no one stayed but Mrs. Lorton of Greyrigg, and Mark Dowthwaite, Wastdale Jobby's youngest son—a St. Bees man waiting for a title to orders: so the coloured stole proved innocuous for the present.

Had it not been for these offend Ralph Wynter would have been well enough liked, for all that our north-countrymen have a prejudice in favour of robustness and strength, and are apt to speak disrespectfully of "lile feckless folk, soft and dwiny." And

though Ralph was not feckless, yet he was on the side of "lile," and looked, but was not, soft.

He was below the middle height, slenderly built, and with the "tendered" air of one who had been kept in hot rooms when a boy, and made delicate by over-care. His skin was too colourless and too transparent for real masculine health, and he had an almost womanish softness of outline; but his face was full of intellectual energy, and if not manly according to the flesh, showed no

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effeminacy of the spirit. His light brown waving hair was brushed back from his forehead and fell low into his neck; he was smooth-shaven, and his clear hazel eyes were soft and sympathetic; but his nose was keen and bony, his mouth had a certain resolute closeness about it that showed he could be tenacious and even hard when occasion served, his jaw was by no means weak, though neither sensual nor self-willed, and his head, though not broad, was firm and high. In a word, he was essentially of the clerical type—a spiritual captain of souls—and Nature herself had consecrated Ralph to the priesthood long before the episcopal laying on of hands.

His dress was strictly ecclesiastical—the coat and vest square-cut, high, and single-breasted; for collar he wore a narrow linen band over a black stock, after the fashion of a Catholic priest; he had oboes and gaiters; and a broad-brimmed hat turned up at the sides, like an undeveloped dignitary's. All this was only the honest expression of the man's real character—an outward distinction between himself and the laity, which it

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seemed to him every clergyman should make; there was not a particle of affectation in it, nor of mummery, still less of theatrical parade.

He was a true-hearted, conscientious man, belonging to the extreme of the High Church party, and a Christian Utopist as well; beginning life with the resolve, God helping, to bring- his parish into a state of medieval piety and simplicity, and to live according to the early examples of the church. It was his daily prayer that he might be enabled to build up in his small corner of the earth a purely Christian church, so that the world might see how these loose and undutiful times could be brought back to the sweet simplicity and holy discipline of the primitive ages, if but the pastors would set the example in themselves, and so lead the people with them. But he had a harder task before him than he had anticipated.

Langthwaite was notoriously the roughest and most neglected parish in the diocese; all things ecclesiastical having been suffered to fall into shameful disorder during priest Laverack's time; so that truly the new comer needed no small

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amount of energy and patience if he would bring matters into only ordinary decency. The church officers, like the clergyman, had grown old and rusty in harness, and their duties were slurred over as so much unpleasant labour which it was their interest to cc get shot of" the soonest possible. It was long since the old clerk had been to school—for he was close upon seventy years of age—and his reading was, to say the least of it, original. He openly spelt the harder words, and those he did not spell he stumbled over any how, making sense or none as might chance. One verse in the psalms he never could be got to understand or deliver other than "and letting the renegades continue in sacredness," for "and letting the runagates continue in scarceness; " Leviathan, which he always spelt, came out as "Levaniaden" when all was done; while "the sonies on the stony hills" did quite as well as the "conies," and was just as comforting to all concerned. But if you asked him, he would tell you that he was a "gay fine scholard, an' nae mon culd bet Min in t' pariss or oot on 't."

He was precentor too as well as clerk, and at

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psalm times used to totter out of his square box under the reading -desk and "shool" down the nave to the raised cross benches at the west end, where he gave out the psalm in his thin quavering voice, half singing, half intoning "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God the hun'ert an' twelft psaulm that man is blest wha stan's in awe o' God an' luves his sacred law," almost in one breath and without a pause or change of inflection any where. Then the choir, consisting of three men and a boy who practised on Saturday nights by chance times at the Nag's Head, tuned their voices by means of a pitch-pipe, and thundered out the psalm in their broadest Doric, but adorned with such wonderful twists and turns as transformed it out of all likeness to the original score. They sung by the guidance of the collective ear; and the collective ear was by no means a safe guide.

None of the congregation thought of joining; as neither did they join in the responses; the service being in their estimation a matter of private arrangement between the parson and the clerk, which it was their duty to listen to, but by no

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means to assist in. Sometimes, indeed, an idiot of the place, one Willie Jackson,—"daft life Wullie" as he was generally called—who, when his "bet-termer" days were on him, used to come to church with some vague idea of his own importance floating through his poor crazed brain, joined audibly enough; but as he repeated the minister's part quite as loudly as the people's, he did not help much towards the establishment of congregational responses.

This old Langthwaite clerk—Davie Alcock as he was registered, but Hawk as he was called, though no one could tell by what process Alcock had been transformed into Hawk—was a character in his way, as much for his total if unconscious want of reverence as for any other cause. In which, however, he only imitated "t' auld priest" himself-a man to whom nothing was sacred nor forbidden, and who was very little, if any, more reverential in the pulpit than what he was at the Nag's Head.

He used to talk to his congregation from the reading-desk or the pulpit in quite a paternal and familiar manner—"John, steek t' door, t' wind's

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like to starve ane," he would say in the middle of the Litany; "Isaac, oppen t' windy—I'se scom-fished wi' t' heat," when half-way through the lesson; "Weel, Martha! an' hoo's the gudeman? I'se glad to see ye after yer mense," before beginning the churching; and so on. Once, when publishing the banns of marriage between Joe Coulson and Mary Postlethwaite, he forgot Mary's surname, and could not read it on the paper. After vain endeavours to decipher it, he broke out with, "Mary, Mary—dang it, why ye a' ken her! she bides down at 'mill yonder!" And Davie did honour the Sabbath so far that he did not "chaw" in church times, but sucked " Spanish" (liquorice) instead; which was more respect to time and place than his master paid.

Not even his duty stopped priest Laverack's pleasures, when he had a mind for the one and not for the other. It came to the bishop's ears how, one Sunday afternoon when the streams were full and the trout rising as they had not risen for many a long day, old Davie gave out to the sparse assembly vainly looking for the minister, "I am to gie notish, there'll be nae

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a'ternoon service the day—parson's gane a-fishing." Another time, when a Queen's letter was to be read, and Davie notified the fact-the clergyman never gave out the notices-he told the people to come early to church, a the titter the better, for t' parson has to gang his ways til Wastcote, priest Armstrong lying badly, an' he'll git clashed oop wi' twa

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sermons gif they coom ower nigh til ane anither." But the Langthwaite people thought nothing of the eccentricities of priest or clerk: they were accustomed to them, and took them all in good part, and as of the natural order of things.

Beside being clerk and precentor, Davie was head bell-ringer as well, which work he did right well when younger than now, having indeed made the Langthwaite bell-ringing what it was. For the old church had a magnificent peal of five bells, all of which were inscribed with rhymed mottoes and dedicatory verses, and all of which had been duly baptized and christened; and the one art carried to perfection in the parish was that of triple bobs and majors. The bells had been given generations ago by one Cloudsdale, of Wastcote

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How, who had sold his kye for that purpose, saying that now his bulls could be heard to it "croon" or bellow as far as Caldton-on-Moor, and should be heard to croon for ever. In daily life Davie was a slogger to his trade; and in his own esteem the most important person in the parish.

The sexton Michael Jordison, a waller, was a man like to him, save that he was of thicker thews, being a big burly fellow like a butcher, while Davie was small and shrivelled and mummified. He had been tithe-collector or "tithe-proctor" before the Commutation Act was passed, and when old Laverack received his tithes in kind—so many stooks of oats or barley (the land was too hungry for wheat), so many cocks of hay, so many fleeces at clipping-time, the tithe geese, the parson's pig, the parson's Easter eggs, with other things. The best horse in the stable if he had a mind, when the tenant died or the land changed hands, & 'royalty on all minerals found within a certain area, and other heriots and fines, came to him as lord of the manor; which the rector of Langthwaite was *ex officio*. Now, however,

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this manner of "lating tithe" was abolished, and the tithers no longer had their July dinner of hodge-podge in the rectory kitchen, all getting well "dashed wi' drink," and parson Laverack with them. So Michael Jordison had only to ring triple bobs and majors and grandsire peals with Davie and the rest, and "hap up" the poor dead bodies in the sunny sloping church-yard to the best of his waning strength. He and Davie were getting past their work, as any one could see; but the two old fellows kept tight hold of their offices, and often swore they "wad dee as they had lived-t' clerk and t' sexton o' t' ould kirk, let what wad coom on't."

The church was in keeping with the services. It was a long square-towered Norman church of the style and date so common in the north country; but neglect and barbarism had done their best to spoil it. The beautiful interior freestone pillars and wide, Norman aisle-arches had been plastered over with whitewash for generations past; all the old stained glass had been carted away and thrown into the rubbish-heap on Yan, wath Soughs, and ordinary panes of greenish

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bottle-glass, each with its bull's-eye somewhere in the square, had -been placed in their stead; the pews were like cattle-pens of all heights and sizes, with the congregation looking all ways, though the old habit of turning to the altar when the creeds,were said still obtained; and it was desperately dirty—Nanny Hawk, Davie's "pleenin" wife, sweeping it out when she had a mind, but not otherwise. And she was a weak-eyed, lanky body who very seldom had a mind for any thing beyond her own fireside, where she sat drinking weak tea all day long, and lamenting that she was "nobbut pleenin an' varra badly."

The chancel, which it was the rector's business to keep in repair, let in the mouldy smell of the Yanwath vaults through the broken ground below, and let in the rain, and the wind through the broken roof above; and in the winter time it was quite part of the show to see old Laverack brush off the snow with his elbow, from both altar-cushion and table, before he could begin the communion service. The communion-plate, of battered pewter, was kept at Davie's house, and used without scruple when required. The altar-

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cloth was a remnant of striped waistcoating, given by Wabster Tommy of High End, when he was churchwarden; the torn surplices of coarsest linen were washed only twice a year by Nanny Hawk, the laundress; the parish registers, piled up on the floor of the barn-like vestry, were mildewed, broken - backed, rat - eaten, and not entire; while as for the furniture of pulpit and reading-desk, what with snow and rain and dust and age, that which had once been ordinary crimson cloth was now like an artist's uncleansed palette, of every imaginable colour, with a preponderance of blister-tinted purple.

The village boys made the raised cross benches at the east end, where they and the three-voiced choir sat, their play place in church time, and the churchyard their playground out of church time; and the men, assembling together by the church door and up the path before going in and on coming out, to discuss the state of crops and how their beasts were "fettling," used the flat tombstones for seats. There was no Sunday-

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school, only an endowed grammar-school dating from the time of Edward the Sixth, built on to

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the churchyard wall, and under the control of nine statesmen—"the Nine" as they were called, with a fine Venetian twang in the phrase, and now taught by an ignorant fellow fitter for the plough-tail than the desk. The charities had all fallen into abeyance and misuse; and the church-wardens understood about as much of their duties as they did of the differential calculus.

Here, then, was work for an active young clergyman, enthusiastic for church discipline and burning to restore the spirit and manners of the Middle Ages. The task of reducing all this carelessness to order, and of replacing so much laxity by the strictness of ecclesiastical control, might have appalled many a man by the magnitude of the work it involved. But Ralph Wynter, strong in the Lord as he said, and. supported by the authority of the rubric and the Fathers, was in nowise appalled. On the contrary, he was well pleased that, as his path was destined to be that of a reformer, the ground was so unbroken, and with so much more to do than to undo. For one thing he was especially thankful: there was no Dissenting or "Methody" place of worship in

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the district. The Wesleyans had tried to bring about a more awakened state among the people; so had the Particular Free-Grace Baptists; the Plymouth Brethren had sent down a delegate ; and the Independents had preached on the deadening influence of the Church as an organized body not working by the free spirit: but all in vain. Langthwaite would not be converted; it would not turn to the right hand or the left; but slouched and lounged up the broad church-path as it had slouched and lounged these three hundred years or more: which gave the High Churchman reason to rejoice, insomuch as he had not to contend with the sin of heresy as well as with the evil of neglect.

For the rest, he expected to make his mark soon and deeply. He thought that the difference between himself and the last incumbent would be of itself a lesson by which his people would be taught and guided. He, a well-read Oxford man —a gentleman by birth and habits, rich, and entering the Church for love of the service only, and for no need of emolument— and the old rector, a man of the country but little supe-

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rior to his parishioners, and lower even than some, miserly, uncouth, unpriestly—what would

not be effected by the very force of that difference alone? But when Ralph Wynter reasoned
thus he put out of court what perhaps he did not understand, the tenacity of the north-country character, and the clannish fidelity which makes the dalesmen prefer their own to the best that the stranger can bring.

Now this old rector, eminently unpriestly as he had been, was really regretted by them, because he was their own; and every one in the place, save perhaps the younger women, would have given a dozen Ralph Wynters, with all his money and scholarship, to have had the rough old man back among them again. Yet what an example he had set them!—an example to carefully avoid, and by no means to imitate in any particular.

Unmarried, his home had been comfortless, bare, and unlovely, with only one snug place in it, the kitchen, where he always sat with his housekeeper, Peggy Jordison the sexton's sister, smoking his long clay pipe in placid peace. The

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dining-room he used for storing grain, apples, and potatoes; and in the drawing-room he kept his saddles, spades, picks, a sheaf of hay-rakes, a harrow, and the best small plough. Weeds grew thick on the garden-paths—not gravel-walks, but merely mud-ways bound together by a few cobble-stones left by the wallers; the lawn, where the rectory cow was often tethered, was as coarse and rank as a field and usually kept for hay; and the only flowers about the place were a few self-sown—Aaron's-beard, southernwood, bluebottles, and bachelors' buttons, a plot of blue flags by the portico, and one root of Turk's-cap lily, poor and dwindled. There were some lavender bushes and at well-sized potato-patch, a few herbs, and some "berry-bushes," and three or four apple-trees lower down; but all was without care or cultivation—a mere weedy wilderness, without the noisy plenty of a farmyard, and without the trimness of a garden.

In youth Christopher Laverack had been a keen sportsman and a noted "bruiser;" and more than one prize wrestler who had stood to his twelfth round at Carlisle races or Wigton fair,

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could tell how, "stripped to buff," the Langthwaite priest had "bet" him in the fight so sure to end the Caldton Saturday market-night, as a profitable preface for his Sunday services. As age advanced he contented himself with fishing; and when that failed he sat in the sanded parlour of the Nag's Head, looking more like a day-labourer past his

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"darrack" than a clergyman, and smoked and drank with the statesmen and quarrymen dropping in. A sociable man, and fond of his glass in good company, he was always ready to join in the wakes and wedding-feasts and christenings as they came; he even went to the "merry nights," though in fear somewhat of the bishop's hand, should it ever reach the bishop's ears that he countenanced the unmistakable immorality of such doings; and he was hail-fellow and boon companion with any one who cared to keep him company.

Rarely was a child brought to the church to be christened, he himself preferring to go to the parents' houses, where he might baptize the newly born while joking with the mother and her gossips, and making good cheer in the ingle-nook

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over the best the house afforded. Indeed his fondness for "sweet butter" and rich griddle-cakes was well known in the parish; and an extra dash of rum was always added to the parson's share of "sweet" or "rum butter," the *sine quâ non* of a lying-in. On Saturday nights he was never thoroughly sober, and more than once he had been decidedly drunk on the Sunday. It was said that after his death a footless glass and a half-emptied bottle of gin were found in the pulpit, stowed away in a dark corner where feckless Nanny Alcock's duster never penetrated; and. many a one remembered his habit of stooping down as he preached, rising with a red face and as if smothering a cough. But the rumour was hushed up and never went beyond the parish, where, however, it circulated pretty freely, if without acrimony. He was one of the old school fast fading away now from the north country; and Ralph Wynter was perhaps reasonable in feeling that the difference between himself and such a man ought to work wonders. Whether it would or not was another matter.

When Ralph came home on that first Sunday

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after the service, his mother asked him how things looked? who stayed to sacrament? and what the congregation was like?—as people do ask who have been left at home.

"Could not be worse, dear mother," was his reply. "The church is a disgrace to a Christian community, as I have told you-a mere cattle-pen, where the men talk aloud and the women whisper audibly; the boys play at marbles with very little attempt at concealment; and all through the service there is an incessant stamping and shuffling and wandering about utterly heathenish. The most prominent person in the congregation

was a lunatic, dressed in a soldier's coat and a hat with a peacock's feather, and his voice drowned at times both my own and the clerk's."

"And the singing?"

"Execrable. The old clerk gives out the psalm and leads the verse; a pitch-pipe regulates the note, and they sing jigs to slow time, with supplementary flourishes and quavers. I leave you to imagine what it is all like."

"My poor Ralph! But you will soon get it all to rights," said his mother. "It is fortunate

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that you are such a good musician; but you have had a hard apprenticeship to-day!"

"I hear there is often no afternoon service for want of a congregation," continued her son. "Old Davie told me with a wink that, when he thinks he can get off the duty, he stands at the church-door, and as soon as the ringing-in bell has ceased, 'claps it to wi' a bang,' especially if he sees any one coming towards the gate. When I told him they had the right to come in when they would, and that he had Ito business to forbid them, he said by way of answer, 'Hoot, awa' wi' ye, mon! they're rest sarra'd for being sae trailly and feckless; they mud has coined titter.'—'Titter,' you know, is sooner.—And then he added, 'Ay, mony's the time I'se jobbed that job for t' auld mon'—as if he was telling of some good action that he was proud of. He did not loo much pleased when I told him he might consider that he had jobbed it for the last time, as I could always make a congregation with the rectory servants alone. But his days are coming to an end here; he must be removed, of course; one of the first things I shall do."

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"And your communicants, Ralph?"

"One lady only, a fair-haired, mild-looking person, and a young man. I do not know who they were; and as I did not want to encourage Davie's chattering, I did not ask. The offertory, beside yours and my own, is one-and-tenpence. I have much to do, dear mother, but all will come right in time; and when I have given them new ideas, and shown them how the services should be conducted, and what the church can be made, I shall win them to the better way. It is always what I desired, you know-a parish which I could regulate according to my own ideas, and without too many onlookers to spoil my work; and I am not afraid."

"God will be with you, my boy; and in His power you will prevail," said Mrs. Wynter fondly.

Mrs. Wynter was an invalid, alternating only between her couch and her bed. Her husband had died suddenly a few days before the birth of her son, and the shock and illness consequent had been too much for her. Disease of a painful but not actively dangerous character had been

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developed, and henceforth her life was one of suffering and confinement. But this monotonous life of hers, varied only by greater or less intensity of pain, had not made her selfish; nor irritable. Full of sweetness and gentle patience, chastened and self-conquered; she bore her cross with true Christian dignity, and was resigned, cheerful, and loving. It was worth a day's journey, and of more value than many a sermon, to merely see how this poor suffering woman accepted her portion, and with what humble faith she recognized the mercy underlying her affliction. Her son used to say that what he preached his mother practised, and that all he asked of sceptic or scoffer was to come into her room, and learn there the value of vital religion.

She was as beautiful too as she was cheerful. As she lay there on her crimson couch, surrounded by birds and flowers and multitudinous pets in aquariums and Wardian cases, her distorted figure shrouded in a soft grey wrapper, and with falling draperies of lace and muslin shadowing her still more softly, many a ball-room belle might have envied both the actual loveliness and

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that more subtle charm of purity and refinement which she possessed. Her face was small and white and waxen; her features delicate and minute; but her eyes were dark and lustrous and her hair was still beautiful, if threaded with silver dines and but penuriously shown from under her close white cap. But it was not so much in, features, artistically good as these were; as in character and expression, that her real beauty lay; for indeed what but personal beauty could come from the spiritual nobleness of her life?

Books and work lay on tables close to her hand; for she was always employed, thus avoiding that self-absorption and, irritability so common to invalids. A large Persian cat, a Skye terrier, and a good-hearted; honest, ugly little mongrel shared her couch. Whenever she could she had children about her; and very often the tramps at the door were brought into her room to comfort and advise, to hear a good word in season, and then to be set on their way rejoicing. She allowed herself no indulgences of idleness

or narrowed sympathies. To her mind her disease was a means of grace, in no wise releasing her from

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any of the duties of life so far as she could fulfil them physically; and she would have condemned herself for fretfulness or indolence or self-absorption quite as severely as if her days were days of pleasant energies and her nights were passed in painless sleep. She was a living instance of the power of the mind over the body, and of the ennobling influence of a high endeavour.

She loved her son as a woman sick and alone would love her only earthly possession; but her training had been less judicious physically than it would have been had she had health. It is so hard for an invalid to understand the robust license of health; and especially hard for an invalid mother to understand the still rougher license of boyhood l Wherefore, governed by her fears, and with no manly life beside her to show how groundless they were, and to plead for the lad's bold liberty—for the liberty even of getting into danger, that he might learn to get out of it again—she had over cared for him, until she had "tendered" him, as has been said. So that, with nothing like effeminacy of original nature, there was not one manly sport or qualification in which

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Ralph could join. He could not swim, he could not ride, he could not shoot, he could not row, he could not box nor fence nor use his hands in any manner of self-defence; but he was a sound musician and a good mathematician, well up in history, and an admirable classic; and he had taken a first-class degree at Oxford.

That Oxford time indeed might have been of great service to him, and college might have done for him what it had not been suffered that school should do. But unfortunately for him, his mother took a small house in the town to be near him during his stay, and every hour that could be spared from his necessary duties had been passed with her. Thus he came out of his college-life as "soft" as he went into it. And what did not tend to brace him in mind or body was this perpetual companionship with sickness, by which he learnt too much and too little of drugs and disease, getting just to the point of discernment with fear, but not to that broader and freer state beyond of belief in nature. Luckily he became a homoeopathist, and, so was saved much self-inflicted damage.

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But if Mrs. Wynter had made her son something less than manly physically, she had educated him morally in all truth and courage and heroic steadfastness, teaching him to live according to the law of God, and to be more afraid of sin than of shame. Weak in muscle and slight in frame as he was there were few men of greater modal courage than he, of more unflinching self-control, or of a more masculine because clean-sighted conscience. A good son, he would have been a loving husband and a just father; all of which perhaps constituted a worthier kind of manliness than being able to fire at a long range or to hit a cricket-ball cleverly. But there was no reason why he should not have had both kinds, had he been more wisely trained.

This then was the stranger parson who had come to Langthwaite to lead and instruct the roughest parish in the county, and to bring under the strictness of medieval discipline men who had never known a master lay or clerical, and to whose clannish loyalty even the people of a neighbouring valley were aliens and inferiors. The task was heavy, and its accomplishment would

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be difficult. Shut in by its severe mountains on the one side, and divided from the world beyond by its desolate waste of moorland on the other—on the high road to nowhere—save in its slate -quarries possessing no art nor industry wanted by the rest of mankind-property rarely changing hands—methods of farming and range of education exactly where they were a hundred years ago—no man of means and culture to give a stimulus to trade, to agriculture, or to ideas—the very tourists, who swarmed elsewhere through the lake-land, avoiding Langthwaite as too isolated and too rough—the place had stood absolutely still in the great social revolution which has changed the rest of England. Society and manners and grooves of thought were all as they were a century ago; and Langthwaite was a local Rip Van Winkle that had gone to sleep behind its mountains while the world beyond was marching forward.

But now its sleep was broken, and the day of its isolation was over. The first influx of new ideas had rushed in, and henceforth was to be the struggle between the old and the new—the

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strong-handed past and the quick-brained present. Ralph Wynter never doubted as to who would be the conqueror; but then he did not understand the gnarled and rugged stuff of which Langthwaite minds were made; and he had not yet come in contact with Jobby Dowthwaite of Dale Head.

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CHAPTER II.

THE LORTONS.

THOUGH avoided by the more holiday kind of tourists because of its poverty and bad accommodation, partly too because of that tremendous Styebarrow Pass, decidedly the severest if the grandest in the country—Langthwaite was won-derfully beautiful, As indeed where is the place in this mountain-land of ours that is not beautiful? Fell and lake and wood and mountain, the wild pass and the desolate moor, clear trout-streams running with pattering feet over the bright stones, and thundering torrents leaping down the mountain side with one bold fling—it had them all. But all that it had it owed to nature; man had done little to either beautify or utilize, Langthwaite Water, Langmere, or the Mere as it was generally called, was one of the narrow seaward-trending lakes, with the mountains rising

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bold and high at the head and along the eastern side, culminating in Green Coom at the foot, but to the south and west falling off into fells and moorland and the flat plains bordering the sea-line. The village was at the head of the lake, sheltered from the north by Styebarrow —a noble range, where Raven Crag, Styebarrow Pass, Sour Milk GhyllForce, and that awful Mickledore Ghyll on the western side, made a ramble over its great expanse asource at once of danger and delight. It was famous for its slate-quarries, its tarns, some rare ferns and rarer plants, and it was one of the most craggy, most precipitous, and most dislocated, so to speak, of all the lake-land mountains.

The rectory and the church stood about a quarter of a mile apart, and both a good mile away from the village, which was of a more modern date than the archaic Langthwaite—the small tumble-down hamlet lying on the southern slope of the rectory hill, and called in books and old parchment deeds Kirk Langthwaite, but in every-day speech Kirkton. This was the original village of the place, built by the villeins of the

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great Yanwath family, when those powerful nobles held the valley as their hunting-ground and the mere as their fishing-pond, and ruled the lives and fortunes of their bondmen as absolutely as we rule those of our cattle; when manses were said in the square-towered church, and monks and friars walked cowled through the park and pleasaunce, tempering the hard-handed oppression of the secular lords, and standing between those poor serfs and the mailed barons as their only stay and help under

Heaven and the Holy Virgin. Traditions of this old time still hung about Kirk Langthwaite in the farmstead called Monk Hall, and in the old tree called Lady Oak; but the monks and the friars had gone like the Yanwaths, and their place was filled by a young Oxonian Lutheran aiming at the impossible—the endeavour to translate the past into the present, and to bind together two opposing eras with a broken cord.

About a mile down the west side of the lake was Greyrigg, where Captain and Mrs. Lorton lived; and farther up, to the north-east, directly under Styebarrow and close to Sour Milk Ghyll, stood

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the Plosh, at the present time uninhabited. Now that old Admiral Sinclair was dead, and dead too without a will, it was said to belong to a young lady in London, a Miss Elcombe, his heir-at-law. But no one knew any thing of her; and the closed shutters of the prettiest house in the valley were deplored as personal offences to Langthwaite, which the people had a right to resent. At the foot of the lake, to the south-east, lay the high bleak valley of Wastdale, shut in by the sharp Langthwaite fells on the one side, and on the other by Hartlop Crags-part of the Green Coom system. At the entrance of this valley stood the How, the modern, square-built, naked, and by no means lovely house of one Luke Hogarth, called indiscriminately Hoggart, Hoggard, or Hoggarty, a kind of half-gentleman, just a degree or two removed above the ordinary "statesmen" as the small landowners in the dales are called; and at the upper end of the dale, right under Hartlop fells, was Dale Head, the farmstead of the "King of Wastdale" —Jobby Dowthwaite, sometimes called also the "King of Langthwaite." As he and his had been virtually this many a year.

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Rounding Hartlop fells was the small chapelry and hamlet of Wasteote-under-Green-Coom, and higher up was the Haverbrack range of fells. South-eastward lay the sea; eastward the rich and fertile country of rivers, plains, and cities.

There were other houses and holdings of course—there were two small farmhouses, besides Dale Head and the How, in Wastdale itself; but as they have nothing to do with the present story, they need not be particularized.

Thus it will be seen that there was but little society of his own grade for the new rector. Indeed there were only two gentlemen's houses in the place—the Plosh and Greyrigg; and one of these was tenantless; so that literally the Lortons were the only people for miles round who could be called gentlefolks, according to the conventional

meaning of the word. Luke Hogarth scarcely came into that category; and Jobby Dowthwaite, for all that he was the "king," was only a rough dalesman.

Captain Lorton of Greyrigg, though one of the natives by birth and long family holding, not of much value to Langthwaite any way. A

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reserved, shy man, he had but one passion—that of study. Shut up in his library with his rare editions and ancient manuscripts, his one or two valuable palimpsests and his Oriental dictionaries, he knew little of the outside world, and cared less. Whether there was a new rector in the parish or a new baby in the nursery were matters of small importance to him compared to the value of his quadriliterals and the true date of his manuscripts; and though he remembered all that he read, he forgot all that he was told. More than once he had inquired why his wife was not down to dinner two hours after the nurse had brought him a new baby to look at over his spectacles curiously; and he never could remember the number, names, or ages of his children.

He might be seen daily stretching his lean legs in long strides over the mountains; but as he generally avoided the high road and wandered off among the crags and mountain-tops, his tremendous walks were not occasion for much intimate intercourse with his neighbours. By many he was looked upon with a little distrust, as not "all, there"—"off at side," as they called it; a

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few believed him not quite canny, and knowing more of things diabolical and unhallowed than became a Christian gentleman; while at home he was a mere cipher—an animated figure—as quiet as a mouse, giving no more trouble, and possessing no more influence. He had served in India, but he never liked his profession; and when his father died he sold out and came back to the old place, glad to be able to live at last the life of solitude and study he had desired from boyhood. And as he was a man without social instincts or political predilections, the Sleepy Hollow of Langthwaite "suited him to a hair," as he used to say.

His present was his second wife, and the mother of a ramping family of little ones; but the stepmother only of Lizzie, the eldest girl. She was a pretty "coozely" woman, soft, fat, fair, and smiling, slightly asthmatic, and threatened with heart-disease, so that she breathed hard and always sat with her mouth half open, and had an excuse for being what she was, the sleepiest and most indolent if also the best-natured woman in the parish—Greyrigg being in consequence the

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most uncomfortable and ill-managed house. All her energy had gone into her motherhood, and she cared for nothing but her children. The only thing that could rouse her from her usual placid apathy was any thing relating to them; and for them she would throw off both indolence and heart-disease, and toil and suffer energetically. But being a woman of instincts only, in nowise under the control of reason, she spoilt them until they were real nuisances, and the veritable plagues of the house.

Kind as she was by nature, and there were few women kinder, Mrs. Lorton did really cruel things to others when the question was of the pleasure, the convenience, or the good of the children. The whole family was sacrificed to them, and especially was sacrificed her step-daughter Lizzie, now just twenty, and, like many girls of that age, yearning for a life of her own and disdaining the association of children in any capacity.

She was a girl without much maternal instinct, latent or developed. As a child she had broken and misused her dolls, preferring for her play-

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mates cats or dogs, or any other live animal whatsoever, irrespective of fangs and claws; and as she grew into girlhood she had but little love or sympathy for these rude, rampaging, over-indulged brothers and sisters of hers—her tormentors rather than her pleasures. Yet Mrs. Lorton made her head nurse and governess-in-chief, and thought that she conferred a privilege and provided her with a real pleasure by so doing. Never so happy herself as when she was swarmed over by her little ones, letting them climb on her back, hang on her shoulders, fight for her knees, pull off her cap, and drag down her scanty blonde hair, she sitting there breathing and smiling like some soft old pussy smothered under her kittens—she could not understand how any one should find them disagreeable, and how their shrill voices and dumpy hot little hands should not be to others the perfect fulfilment of all life that they were to herself. Lizzie thought otherwise, and escaped the nursery whenever she could; and when she could not revenged herself in spiteful onslaughts both by hand and tongue. But she dared not do much in that way; for the children used to run off at

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once to mamma, howling bitterly when " Sissy" slapped or shook them, as she did when vexed; and then Mrs. Lorton rose up in her wrath, and times were bad for the poor solitary undisciplined girl. As for appealing to her father in any of her disasters, or calling on him to see justice done her in her incessant quarrels with her stepmother and

her stepmother's children, she might as well have appealed to the figure of Ganesa on his chimneypiece. So she grew up as absolutely alone morally as if she had been on a desert island, and in the dangerous state of mind of one nursing a daily grievance, and feeling tyrannized over and persecuted at home.

She was a lovely girl in her way, for those who admire such manner of loveliness as hers; but she was not popular, therefore not admired at Langthwaite, where the singularity of her beauty caused her to be regarded as a "blacky." Many believed her to be the daughter of an Indian woman or of a gipsy, and made up queer stories to that effect, as country people will do when dealing with things not quite understood. And her appearance almost justified them; for she was a tall,

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low-browed, foreign-looking girl, with almond shaped eyes of that rich velvety moleskin brown, which has an outer pencilling of orange round the iris, set deep within large orbits, a soft and creamy skin, and raven hair cut short and clustering in thick rings and curls above her brow; her lips were full, finely curved, and red; but her cheeks were pale, save at the least emotion, and then they crimsoned painfully enough; her lashes were curling, thick, and long ; and her eyebrows were broad, and as level as if ruled with a line. There was a certain savageness about her beauty scarcely to be described—a, certain supple grace and hidden strength that, reminded one of a panther or a leopardess, of itself suggestive of tropical life with all its fire; and affluence. She looked the stuff of which a heroine or a criminal might be made, the occasion alone determining the good or evil issue of her intense nature. Martyr or murderess—the choice hung on the chances of fortune only!

Dissatisfied with her narrow sphere, she panted for life and action, as the imprisoned pant for freedom; consuming her youth in burning wishes,

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fruitless and destructive, for something on which to expend the craving energy of her being. The dull monotony of Langthwaite was torture to her, and her nursery life hideous. She had no companions that she loved, no pursuits that she cared for, no interests, no pleasures. She rose in the morning indifferent to all her actual life, but with a sobbing desire towards something unknown and far distant—travel, danger, war, shipwreck, even death itself, if in a stirring cause and where her fervent being could be fulfilled in some great deed of heroism before the world; she went to bed breaking herself to pieces against the anguish of her fate, her heart swollen with her fancied wrongs, hating the dull bondage of her home, and weaving all sorts of wild schemes of

escape—and sometimes of revenge, and sometimes of a sadder ending still. More than once, had not her young life been so strong in her and her belief in the future so vital though so vague, she would have gone down into the depths of the blue lake lying below her window, and have slept there the sleep which knows no waking. But that merciful hope which helps us through the bad times held

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her back; and day by day she whispered to herself, "Perhaps it will come to-morrow;" but day by day the morrow came and went, and the shadowy joy that was to come with it still delayed. Then she sank into a state of apathetic despair from which some new cross or grievance called her back to the old fierce round of hate and agony and fruitless striving. So she lived and bloomed in her young beauty, the saddest and most stormy maiden in the whole north country; but also one who, by good uses and in her fitting sphere, might have been made the noblest and most heroic.

But poor Mrs. Lorton, who could neither we causes nor read character, simply thought her disagreeable and ill-tempered, and fervently wished that "some one would come to Greyrigg and take a fancy to her, and marry her off-hand without more ado." Her step-daughter was the only cross she had to bear in her sleepy life; but she was not very far wrong in feeling it to be a heavy one.

Lizzie was not at home when the new rector arrived, having gone to spend a week with Grace Hogarth of Wastdale How; as she sometimes did when wretched enough to be condescending. For

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though Grace was not a "lady," save to her servant and the hinds-being of that half-bred link between the farmers and the gentry so well known in country places—and though Lizzie was both proud and refined, still even the full-flavoured hospitality of Wastdale How was better than the irritating presence of those turbulent young imps at home, and a relief to her vexed heart. Wherefore she only heard of the apostolic-looking young clergyman, for whom Mrs. Lorton at once conceived a strong maternal interest, and of whom she wrote with so much gushing enthusiasm thatLizzie, by the very opposition of nature between them, took a decided prejudice against him, and felt sure she should hate him, as she hated every body else.

Still, it was something to hear that he had arrived at last, and to know that there were two strangers to become acquainted with, and new furniture to see, and a dash of new life altogether in the place; and she talked herself into almost a state of contentment

about it, and seemed inclined to make capital somehow out of the change. But Grace was wonderfully cool about the whole

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matter; and when Lizzie "wondered what he was really like, after all; mamma was always so exaggerated and silly, her account could not be taken;" she laughed her loudest laugh, shaking back her brown hair, and saying shrilly, "she was sure she didn't know, and for her part didn't mind."

Then Lizzie, affronted that she had been put down, said no more; for the two girls were not intimate enough to be confidantes; and so the matter stood, and Lizzie thought out her own thoughts in silence.

When her seven days came to an end she went home to Greyrigg; and even Grace, pretty, bright, laughing Grace, the merriest and the bonniest lass in the parish, and who really liked Lizzie Lorton—perhaps because she was one of those sunny creatures who like every one—even she did not regret her, she had been so unusually dour and downcast this time. And when she had been at home two days she met Ralph Wynter in the lane.

The children who were with her, and who had seen him before, ran up to him and stopped him—

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clustering round him, and pulling at his coat and umbrella as if they had known him all their young lives. For a country education makes children either very shy or very bold, according to the amount of sensitiveness bestowed by nature. It had made the young Lorton very bold—Lizzie, in spite of the pride engendered by being the only "lady" in the place (Mrs. Lorton had been her father's lady housekeeper) being as shy as they were bold. But as they stopped and spoke, she bad to stop with them, and to say who she was, the thought flashing across her that she might possibly be taken for the governess. "Captain Lorton's eldest daughter," said Lizzie, when Willie the eldest boy —a blunt-nosed, wide-mouthed varlet of seven—screamed out, "This is Lizzie! you haven't seen Lizzie before, Mr. Wynter!" And as she spoke a deep blush came into her cheeks, and reflected itself in the young rector's fair face in almost as much confusion as her own.

She was angry with herself for blushing; but then she was notorious for blushing; and she reflected that Mr. Wynter would soon understand

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this peculiarity of hers, and so would not take it as any thing special to himself; and as she turned away from, him she sighed—and her sigh was the very soul of weariness and disappointment. The dear-voiced young rector in his clerical costume, and with his smooth, pure, tranquil face, had not pleased her.

But he, as he walked home, thought Was Lorton one of the most beautiful girls he had over seen; and before he reached the rectory gate had formed twenty plans, and more, for associating her in the parish work, and securing her active cooperation in all the reforms he intended to effect.

"I have seen another parishioner to-day, mother," he said as he went in; "such a pretty girl!"

"Indeed !" she smiled, " and who is she?"

"Miss Lorton—Captain Lorton's eldest daughter. I met her in the lane with the children, and spoke to her, and was quite delighted with her. She is evidently a person of much feeling and strong character, and I shall make her my lay-deaconess."

"Have you heard of her in the parish at all? has she ever taken any active part?"

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"No; who could under that old Laverack he answered.

"True, dear. And you think she will like it, and be one of us?"

"Surely yes! She is far too good not to be of the right sort," said Ralph. "I know she will be amost valuable coadjutor. Indeed she is the only gentlewoman we have to look to. You know what I mean, dear mother. There are plenty of good young women and capital men in the place, and I can make them available; but she is the only educated person, the only one with real cultivation or largeness of mind. She is of a different order to the rest altogether; different indeed to any thing I have ever seen before."

"You must bring her to see me, my dear," said his mother smiling; "I should like to see the girl who has roused my boy into such unusual enthusiasm."

"I will, as soon as I can get hold of her," he answered simply. "I hope you will like her, mother. It will be pleasant to us both if we can make friends of the Lorton; and from all I hear they seem to be thoroughly worthy people."

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"I liked Mrs. Lorton when she called," said Mrs. Wynter; "she seemed to be such an amiable, motherly, comfortable kind of person. And then she has one of those soft voices which always please me. A soft voice in a woman is one of my 'fancies,' as you know. What quality of voice has Miss Lorton?"

"I really do not know," replied Ralph; "she spoke so little that I did not notice it."

Nor had he: but the truth was, Lizzie Lorton had not a pleasing voice save when she sang, and then it was a rich and powerful contralto, but not under good control. In ordinary speech it was deep and decidedly harsh, and by no means the kind of voice considered "excellent in woman." She used strong language too, and she spoke in italics; both of which things were specially painful to Mrs. Wynter; and she had a certain bitter accent that struck on the ear disagreeably.

But knowing nothing of all this as yet, and expecting to see just an ordinary country girl frill of pleasant little occupations, enthusiastic about small nothings, delighted to be accepted as a lay worker for the church, and eager to learn, if she

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did not already know, the meaning and the mystery of church symbolism and the conduct of the services, she prepared herself to receive her son's lay-deaconess with affectionate interest, and day by day asked when she was coming; neither fearing nor foreseeing evil.

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CHAPTER III.

RALPH WYNTER'S LAY-DEACONESS.

TWO or three days after this Grace Hogarth clattered into the dining-room at Greyrigg, where Lizzie Lorton sat "at school," vainly endeavouring to convince Kate and William that h, e, a, d spelt head, and nothing more remote or unintelligible; but which apparently simple process wilfulness on the one side and impatience on the other rendered a work of considerable difficulty.

"I am going to the rectory, Miss Lizzie," cried Grace in her clear, high-pitched voice; "do come along with me-do now, Miss Lizzie!"

Had the request been made at any other moment Lizzie would probably have refused; but coming now as an occasion of escape from this hated school-time she said "Yes" without further discussion. For among the other un-

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amiable qualities which her uncongenial life was fostering in her was that of opposition simply for the sake of opposition.

"Now don't make yourself too smart, Miss Lizzie," cried Grace as she was leaving the room; "you'll shame me if you do, for I have only my every-day things on."

"I really cannot call on Mrs. Wynter shabbily dressed to please you, Grace," said Lizzie coolly. "You ought to dress more like other people, and, then you would not be ashamed of yourself."

"O, I don't mind!" laughed Grace; "I'm good enough for father, so I'm good enough for any body else. I don't mind, Miss Lizzie: dress as you like best yourself."

"I shall go as I ought to go, Grace," returned Lizzie grandly, shutting the door.

"Yah, yah!" cried gate and William, pointing after her with their fingers, "I'm glad you're gone, you great nasty ill-tempered thing!"

"O Gracey," cried gate, clambering on to the girl's knee and pulling at her hair, "I wish

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you were our sister instead of that nasty old Lizzie—ugly cross old thing! I wish she was dead!"

"I will kill her when I am a man—great cross-patch draw the latch!" said William.

And then they both said, "Yah, yah! we'll kill you, you ugly old cross-patch draw the latch!" and pointed with their fingers to the door.

If Lizzie was ill-tempered, "the imps," as she called them, were ill-mannered; so that the sad balance of wrong hung on the whole pretty evenly between them, and Lizzie might be almost excused her disinclination if not her fierceness towards them.

Of course, after this little passage of arms with Grace, Lizzie dressed herself with unusual care; consequently she looked superbly beautiful, and with the unmistakable stamp of "gentlewoman" upon her—in itself so great a beauty. Grace too

looked, if not superbly beautiful nor as thorough-bred as her companion, yet lovely in her own artless way, though her costume was such as no one but herself either could or would have

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worn, its peculiarities being excessive coarseness of material and the most daring admixture of colours—which yet harmonized somehow, though so audacious.

But Grace never troubled herself about fashion or material, and would have laughed at any one preaching the gospel of millinery proprieties. She oared only for brightness of Dolour, ease of fit, and a brevity and skimpiness of skirt absolutely astounding in these days of crinolines and trains; and as she was dimly conscious that her snippets of scarlet and blue and her wreaths of leaves and berries became her, and as she knew that she was not extravagant, and that she coat father as little as any girl could cost him, what did it matter? If grand folks liked silks and satins and all such foolishness, let them have them: for her part, she preferred things that would not spoil and that would wash, and thought short petticoats, country clogs, and coarse cloth the most sensible things for a climate where it rains every other day, and sometimes every day for a month at a time. Perhaps she was right.

She was dressed to-day neither better nor

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worse than usual, for all that she was going to make a state visit on the grand lady of the place, and it might have been supposed that she would have been careful in her get-up. But there she was in the old costume—a scarlet cloak of the true gipsy cut, and a bright blue gown, short enough to show the prettiest ancles in all Langthwaite, and considerably more than the ancles—purple stockings and clogs (boots soled with wood and iron) that made a clattering like a troop of dragoons when she walked; and she had thick buff-coloured dogskin gauntlet gloves, and a flapping straw hat round which for all trimming was a wreath of ivy, very prettily disposed. For Grace would as soon have worn paint and patches as artificial flowers; and lace and ribbon she called rags and jags.

Then from underneath this wonderful hat of hers streamed her long brown hair in natural curls, falling far down her back, and round one of the prettiest and most innocent faces to be seen in a long summer's day. Her eyes, of a clear light blue, opened wide beneath soft and rounded brows; her nose was blunt and kid-like; her lips

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were wide and generally apart; her teeth were like a young child's—small, white, and even she was rather above the middle height; indeed she and Lizzie Lorton stood exactly to the same level; but she did not look so tall as Lizzie, being rounder in form and very much fuller in substance; her movements were graceful, inasmuch as they were unconsidered and natural, but she had a certain country clumsiness about her that marked the want of good society and the absence of refined training; and her general expression was one of good temper and innocent surprise, but without much intellect, and without a trace of the deeper passions. She was just a healthy natural girl, with a good, share of common sense underneath a simplicity of manner which bordered upon silliness; affectionate, good-tempered, and pure; but she was no sage and no heroine.

Such as they were then, in their total contrast of character and appearance, the two girls set out together to pay their first visit to the invalid lady.

"I hope that we shall not find Mr. Wynter at home," said Lizzie as they went along.

"Gracious me, Miss Lizzie! I am sure I hope

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he will. I want to get sight of him; for I couldn't get to church these two Sundays for the rain, and I want to have a look at him."

Grace did not speak "broad Cumberland," but she had a decided accent, and often used provincialisms both in isolated words and more subtle manner of expression.

"Why don't you want him to be at home, Miss Lizzie?" she asked, after a short pause.

"I don't like him," replied Lizzie curtly.

"No? my goodness me! and I hear every body speak of him as a real beauty—like an angel Aggy Dowthwaite said to me; and Mark said he was just what a parson should be; and Mark, you know, don't flatter folks."

"I hate men who are like angels!" answered Lizzie disdainfully; "they are always such stupid effeminate things."

Grace laughed: "Well, a man should be stout and like a man, that's for certain," she said. "But you know, Miss Lizzie, looks are only deceitful after all, and Mr. Wynter may be stouter than he looks."

"A man with fair hair and a white face!" cried Lizzie contemptuously.

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"Well, Miss Lizzie?"

"Well; fair-haired men are always effeminate, Grace."

"Not always, I think," the girl replied a little gravely; "I think I know some as would beat the best black-haired Southerner could be brought."

"And I don't," answered Lizzie.

"Why! not the Dowthwaites, Miss Lizzie?" asked Grace with a heightened Dolour. "They are all as fair as fair; and I am sure as manly a set of lads as one would wish to see <in a long summer's day are the Dowthwaite lads."

"I forgot them; but then they are common people," Lizzie said, in her proudest voice; and Grace, who understood her nicest shades of manner, and who dreaded nothing so much as to put her out of temper, changed the conversation; and, with the unerring tact of the good-tempered and unselfish how ignorant soever they may be, smoothed down the raffling feathers, and brought her, as she generally did, into a tolerably peaceful state of mind. So that they had quite a pleasant walk this bright frosty day of February, enjoying the cut across the fields and the narrow stiles,

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and the slippery stepping-stones as if they had been children, until they came to "Kirk lonnin," leading up to the rectory.

Mrs. Wynter was at home, that is, able to receive visitors; which was not always the case, when her pains were unusually severe; and the two girls were admitted into the hall—Grace nudging Lizzie to call her attention to this and that, the encaustic tiles, the oaken settles, the church-like chairs, and great open chimney with dogs, "just like the farm-houses"—and high grates and coals, such a mark of gentility in Langthwaite!—the pattern of the stairs'-carpet, and the carved black oak press in the hall—"for all the world like Jobby Dowthwaite's, I do declare," cried Grace—the unknown flowers, and the majolica pots to keep them in; every thing being of a style essentially new to both. For though Lizzie had seen something of the world and society when quite a child, she had not, even then seen any thing of High Churchism.

She, however, was too proud to do more than merely glance here and there furtively, while Grace stared at every thing in undisguised as-

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tonishment, saying at every turn, "My word, Miss Lizzie, look here!" "Goodness me, but that's queer!" "Patience me!" and the like, below her breath: kept in order by the servant, else she would have said more.

Then they went into the invalid's room—the drawing-room with the pendent oriel window; near to which, looking into the great heart of the mountain, and surrounded by flowers and pets and all manner of beautiful things, lay Mrs. Wynter on her crimson couch, enveloped in grey and white draperies as usual.

"Miss Lorton and Miss Hogarth," said the, man as he opened the door.

"We must tell which is which, else you will not know," said Grace in her clear open voice, coming forward in advance of Lizzie who hung back a little shyly. "I am Luke Hogarth's' daughter; and this is Miss Lizzie Lorton."

Mrs. Wynter smiled and held out her hand. Like many invalids her perceptions were almost unnaturally acute, and she was a quick reader of character; and the frank, fresh, heathery kind of atmosphere round Grace—the untainted health

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and innocence which she expressed—pleased her at first sight.

"I am very glad to see you both," she said; and then she looked at Lizzie, her son's lay-deaconess, and her pleasant smile a little faded, but she smiled still; "and glad to see you, kiss Lorton. My son has spoken to me of you," she added, giving her left hand—Grace still retaining her right.

Lizzie blushed deeply as usual, and oast down her eyes as one in shame and secret trouble, while Grace looked full into the sweet pale face smiling on her from the pillow, and pressing the thin hand in both her own, said artlessly, " Poor thing, how ill you look! I am right sorry to see you lying there."

"O! I am not to be pitied," said Mrs. Wynter cheerfully; and Lizzie raised her dark eyes in wonder at the bright tone of one so suffering. I am entirely happy; happier perhaps than either of you, young and healthy, and I trast happy, as you both are."

She looked at them both with interest, watching their young faces.

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"You look happy," said Grace, drawing a chair close to the couch, and leaning forward in an affectionate attitude, as if she and the lady were old friends; but Lizzie sat

at the proper conventional distance, and wished that Grace would not be so familiar; "but I'm sure I wonder at it," continued the girl, "for I heard Geordie Bird—he's our doctor, you know—tell father only last night that you must suffer a deal at times, and that he only wondered you had lived through it."

"I live through it, because it is God's will to keep me here, and because He has still work and duties for me to perform in life," said Mrs. Wynter gently

"But what a life!" cried Lizzie; "what a dreadful existence!"

"No, not in the least degree dreadful, my dear. Do I not tell you that I am happy in it?" Mrs. Wynter answered.

"You cannot be. Fancy lying here day after day—day after day—with no change, nothing ever happening, never able to get out, no excite-

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ment, and in awful pain. You cannot be happy," Lizzie said again.

"Have I no mercies to set against my trials?" replied Mrs. Wynter ; "and do you not think that divine grace not only lightens suffering, but even turns it to the occasion of a deeper joy than can be had by more pleasure?"

Lizzie shook her head mournfully.

"I cannot believe in impossibilities," she said, her voice more than usually roughened and deepened. "If I were to be like you, I should kill myself and have done with life altogether."

"Ah, my dear young lady, you have much to learn," Mrs. Wynter answered with a certain compassionate accent in her voice that touched the girl's quick heart; "and it may be—who knows?—that God will bring you also to Himself through the purification of suffering and sorrow."

"If that were true I should be' religious now," said Lizzie with a burning face; "for I am unhappy enough."

"Wait the good time, and all will come right. Believe only that every trial is sent us for some wise purpose, and that patience and submission

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are the means by which sorrow becomes the source of peace."

"That is all very well for you," said Lizzie; and then she stopped.

"I understand you, my dear. To a young creature like yourself, full of life and energy, my words are more words and nothing more. Perhaps you even call them cant. Any spiritual position which we have not experienced for ourselves sounds like cant, unless we have so much faith as will enable us to believe in what we do not know. Have you so much faith as this, Miss Lorton?"

"But trials do not do good to all people," said Lizzie. "Some are made worse by them—hardened and soured; only patient people are softened and made religious. And they would have been religious whatever had happened to them."

"Then God does not work in our lives, and we are the mere creatures of chance?" said Mrs. Wynter.

"I do not say that," Lizzie answered reluctantly; "but, it is very hard to believe that the wrong and injustice done us by our fellow-

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creatures are trials sent by God, and that we ought to submit patiently. Patience is sometimes cowardice; and cowardice, and lying down tamely to be trampled on, is an infamy!" she added passionately, flaming up into one of her vehement moods, when the spirit possessing her was one of only bitterness and wrath.

"Ah, well, we will not discuss the question now," said' Mrs. Wynter soothingly, but pained at this untoward revelation. "Come and see me often; and when you know me better you will speak quite freely to me, and I may be a help to you when. I understand the story of your life more thoroughly than I do now."

"O! every one knows what is the matter with Miss Lizzie," cried Grace. "She is unhappy at home because she does not get on well with Mrs. Lorton, and because she does not like the children. And they are humoursome, I must say. As fine a set of children as you'd wish to see, but over-petted, poor things."

"Not get on well with Mrs. Lorton?" repeated Mrs. Wynter. "I should have thought that impossible. She seems to be one of the

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gentlest and sweetest -tempered women in the world."

"You should see her at home about the children; you would not call her so very sweet or gentle then!" said Lizzie hurriedly. "And as for the children, they are the most detestable little things under the sun. I don't think there can be more horrid children any where. I hate them!"

"Hush! hush! you must not use such words, or talk of hating children," said Mrs. Wynter gravely. "That is a thing which makes me really unhappy; for I love children, and if I could would have them always with me. They are health and grace and light to me."

"I cannot tell stories," said Lizzie a little sullenly. "I do not like children; they are always so tiresome; and these of Mrs. Lorton's are worse than any other."

"Forgive me then for saying it, but I think it must be your own fault if you are unhappy at home, as Miss Hogarth says," Mrs. Wynter answered.

"Why my fault?" Lizzie asked rebelliously.

"Why? because if you are living in such a

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terrible state of feeling as you yourself describe—hating your stepmother, who has certainly nothing to bate about her, and even those poor little innocent children, who cannot have offended you—there must be something very far wrong in yourself, my dear child; and it is your own unruly temper, and not the circumstances of your life, that you ought to condemn and change. Do not be offended at my plain-speaking; I should be wanting to my idea of Christian duty were I not to speak plainly."

Tears came into the girl's eyes.

"Always my fault I" she said in an, accent of despair. "Every one scolds me, and says how wrong and wicked. I am; but no one finds fault with the others. Why am I always to be blamed? Why am I to be treated as such a criminal—such a wretch?"

"Suppose instead of taking that tone, which only keeps up your feeling of wrong, you try what you can do to mend matters both for yourself and others," said Mrs. Wynter. "Be kinder to the children than you are."

"I am as kind as I can be!" interrupted Lizzie.

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"Grace! you know what little horrors they are! Tell Mrs. Wynter that it is not my fault," she added warmly.

"They are humoursome, certainly," said Grace; "their mother makes too much of them; but they are fine children too, and might be easily managed if Mrs. Lorton would let them be."

"Well then, do you manage them," said Mrs. Wynter to Lizzie. "Try that most powerful of all methods, patience. Believe me, dear child, you can only control others by controlling yourself—you can only get love by giving it."

"I cannot love them!" exclaimed Lizzie passionately. "They make my life so miserable, that I often wish myself dead to escape from them. Mrs. Lorton turns me into a mere servant: and papa is so taken up with his books he sees and knows nothing; and there I am sacrificed to those creatures, and, as I say, made a more servant of. Do you think I can like that, Mrs. Wynter? or that I can love them when I am treated so at my own home—and I the eldest daughter too, and my mother a lady!" with a passionate pride of accent that was another revelation to Mrs. Wynter.

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At this moment the door opened, and Ralph came in to see his mother before going to the village. He did not know that Lizzie and Grace were there, so flung open the door in that unconcerned manner of home familiarity which no visitor ever sees; while Lizzie, ashamed that she should be caught in one of her vehement outbursts, coloured painfully; and her blushes again reflected themselves on his face.

His embarrassment was very momentary however; and after shaking hands with the girls, he drew a chair near to the couch, and the general conversation began-Lizzie speaking but seldom; Mrs. Wynter silent too, for sorrow at what she had seen of the girl's undisciplined nature; and Grace having most to say of the four.

Then Ralph, his mind always on the church and the services, began with the two girls; opening his battery point-blank by asking them, without any preamble, if they would form part of his new choir, and take classes in the Sunday-school which he was trying to establish? They would have to come twice a-week in the evening to practise; for the present they must come to the rectory, but when

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certain things were better arranged, the practising would be in the church itself Wilkin Yanwath the draper had promised to come, and one or two more whose names he

mentioned; but he could not say that he was quite satisfied with his selection as it stood; he wanted a few more cultivated voices, and especially he wanted Miss Hogarth and Miss Lorton.

But Grace shook her head and all its curls, and laughed and said, "Nay, but I am too far off to be of much good, else indeed I would not mind doing what I could, though not a good hand at music or any thing else: but five miles off is rather too far for winter-night practising, even though Daisy is as good a beast as ever walked. I might ride over by chance times in the bright weather; but I am sure that father would never let me come regularly." And as for Sunday-school, she had the same answer for that. In the fine weather, and even when only a little bit drizzly, she did not mind, but in a regular Langthwaite day (she meant a thorough down-pour) it would be impossible, and Mr. Wynter himself must see that.

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But he did not; being urgent and enthusiastic to the point of unreasonableness.

Lizzie too declined the Sunday-school: "I have teaching enough at home," she said, looking down. And then she repeated, but softened in emphasis, what she had just confessed to Mrs. Wynter, that she did not like children, and above all things hated teaching.

At the singing too she shook her head, saying she had never been taught; and she could not sing; and church-music especially was so stupid ; and she was sure she could never manage part-music; and all the other well-known excuses of the reluctant anxious to make obstacles where were none before.

This was not a very hopeful beginning for Ralph; but he had inherited his mother's temper, with a certain sweet and playful persistency which seldom failed to carry his point when he really set himself to the task. So he would by no means take the young ladies' No for absolute; though forced at last to confess that Grace at least had some show of reason on her side, and that a journey of ten miles on a stormy winter's night in the

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country was rather a barrier to the acceptance of any very active part in parish work. But Miss Lorton was another matter, and not to be let off on any account.

When she objected that she could not sing, and certainly could not sing sacred music, he opened the small chamber-organ that stood in the hall and put both her and

Grace to the test, he himself leading. And as he made it a matter of personal courtesy to himself that they should try, and as Grace got up readily to do her artless best, Lizzie was in a manner forced to comply, and when fairly launched the natural desire to excel carried her grandly through the trial.

The voices blended beautifully in chord and quality; but Lizzie gave the richness, the depth, the iron as it were to the whole. They represented a triad of circumstance and character deeper than the mere difference of register and pitch. The birdlike trill of Grace, pure and clear, was the sweetness of nature untroubled and undefiled; Ralph's careful and correct modulation was the training of education and. the intelligent grace of art; but Lizzie's deep full tones, always rich

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and seldom true, expressed the suffering of the yearning heart and the fire of the unchastened soul, the power lying in the grand sweep of passion and the infinite exaltation of love.

She wanted training to be a good part-singer, but there was the material; and Ralph told her pleasantly that he would not let her off now, how much soever she might protest; thinking that the task of teaching her would be no unpleasant diversion from the ruder labour of hammering out "Magnificats" and "Te Deums" from the rough larynxes of the village boys and men.

And Mrs. Wynter joined her persuasions to his; on her side thinking that perhaps some wholesome occupation, something that would take her out of herself and give her an interest in duties specially connected with religion and the church-services, would help to soothe her wayward storm-tossed soul and exalt it into a nobler life.

So it was arranged that the preliminary practising should begin to-morrow night; Grace, as it was settled weather, consenting to come too, and volunteering to bring Mark Dowthwaite as an escort for herself and a help in the choir; "for

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Mark has, a very tuneable voice," said Grace radiantly.

"Mark Dowthwaite? who is he?" asked Mrs. Wynter.

"Jobby Dowthwaite's youngest son," answered Grace; "neighbours of ours. They live at Dale Head and we at the Haw; so that we are close neighbours as you may say—only a mile apart."

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"And what is Mark Dowthwaite?" again asked Mrs. Wynter.

"A St. Bees man waiting for a curacy, which seems very long a-coming," Grace answered innocently. "Then there's Elcy; but she's so shy there's no getting her to do any thing, else she has a pretty voice enough; only I doubt if Jobby would be willing to let her came so far; for she isn't over strong, isn't poor Elcy "

"Is Elcy Mark's sister?" asked the young rector.

"Yes, the only girl they have; and a very fine girl too; very pretty; don't you think so, Miss Lizzie?"

"Yes, she is rather pretty," Lizzie answered

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just a trifle disdainfully; for she did not think the beauty of a farmer's daughter with rough hands and untidy hair a thing to be very emphatic about. "I cannot say that I admire her as much as you do, Grace; and then she is so dreadfully freckled!"

"That's the fineness of her skin," cried Grace. "I think she is a darling out and out!"

And then she too blushed a little, though not one of the blushing kind, and looked more conscious than Grace Hogarth generally looked.

"Where do they sit in church?" asked Ralph.

He was not very quick in learning names; and the names of his parishioners, of an etymological character with which he was not familiar, a little puzzled him.

"In the big square pew by the side-door," Grace answered; "the square pew alongside of 'Adam and Eve.'"

"What? the three tall men, and that stout woman?—an old man, a middle-aged one, and one fair-haired and quite young?"

"Yes, they're the Dowthwaites sure enough," said Grace.

"But I have seen no girl with them yet."

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"No; Elcy's been but poorly lately. She often is in the winter time, and gets a cold and cough, and such like; but she's better now, and maybe will be at church next

Sunday. I'll not tell her you want to see her, else she'd be sure not to come, silly girl; she's so shy!"

"O, I'll soon tame her 1" laughed Ralph; and Grace laughed too, in the shrill cadence that all Langthwaite knew by heart, and loved like the song of a favourite bird.

So the next night saw the beginning of the new system of psalm-singing and chanting; as yet though only in the first inchoate endeavour, pending the more perfect arrangements to be made when things were better ordered. For an organ-loft was to be built; and an organ was to be had from Hill's people; and the whole interior of the church was to be "restored" from vault to roof, and from the east end to the west; and a Sunday-school was to be built, and a lending-library, and a Mechanics' Institute; and a cricket-club was to be organized—all of which things the new rector intended to do in succession, as he had means and time, and knew exactly what of his own fortune

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he could sacrifice, and what help his parishioners would give.

For of course theywould give some help, thought Ralph Wynter confidently. And it would be better that they should do so; for then they would feel a personal pride in the improvements as their own, and not as so much gratuitous almsgiving bestowed by the high-handed generosity of a stranger. And of course too they would accede to all he proposed—to the re-pewing of the church, involving re-allotment—to the decoration, the restored roof, the stained windows, &c. But if they would not?—as it sometimes struck him as just possible. Well! if they would not, then the Bishop would grant him a faculty, he said; and he would bear the sole expense himself!

In the mean time, in this first faint beginning of the greater things to come, only four attended the rectory-practisings—namely, Wilkin Yanwath the good-looking young tailor and draper of Langthwaite; Lizzie Lorton the only "lady;" Grace Hogarth; and Mark Dowthwaite, Wastdale Jobby's youngest son, the St. Bees man waiting for a title to orders.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE BETTER WAY.

WITHOUT becoming in the least degree enthusiastic on the subject of church-services, Lizzie Lorton soon began to feel an interest in her new occupation, and practised both

music and singing so diligently that she made herself the most efficient of the small choir. Indeed so efficient, that Ralph used to say seriously if pleasantly, she should be the organist when his grand improvements were completed; and for this purpose gave her instructions on his own chamber-organ, as to stops and the like-the girl accepting his teaching with wonderful docility.

As time went on she saw a good deal of the Wynters; going to the rectory twice or thrice in the week, sometimes with her stepmother, but more often alone; which she liked better than to be accompanied. For then she was petted and "made

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of," which pleased her, craving for love and sympathy as she did, poor child! while the quiet influences of the house fell on her with best effect, and helped to calm her into something that was at the least content if not happiness.

But it was only a substitute after all. She did not cheat herself into the belief that this was Life, or that learning counterpoint with a fair-faced young rector to teach, was the ultimate to which her energies could reach. Still, it was something: and in the monotony of the country even small instalments of active life are to be accepted thankfully, and make believes must do when the realities are not to be had.

Ralph admired his gipsy-looking chorister immensely; chiefly perhaps because she supplied the warm emotional nature and larger volume of physical life wanting both to himself and to his mother. But Mrs. Wynter was interested in her from lofty Christian motives rather than from personal sympathy; and though she wished to do her good, yet she had not really taken to her, as the phrase goes. The girl's very strength of nature, her impatience of trial or sorrow, and her

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unbridled temper, repelled and shocked her; and she was at times oppressed and almost overcome by the stormy turbulence of her being. She pitied her, however; and pity gave her the softer semblance of love. She did not fear any untoward result from this intimacy, so far as her son was concerned. She thought that Ralph must see the girl's character as it was, and that he would be only earnest for her conversion, as for that of any other wandering soul. But any thing warmer than this—impossible!

Indeed she was never anxious about him on this matter. She knew exactly what his wife was to be, and could have painted the very colour of her eyes, and have given the key-note of her voice. She would know her like an old acquaintance when she came—some gentle, earnest girl full of compassion and womanly sweetness,

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enthusiastic for High-Church services, eager in good works among the poor, loving and religious; a saint by nature twice sanctified by grace; as unlike this brown-eyed flushing Lizzie Lorton as Saint Elizabeth was unlike Delilah. Yes, she would know her when she came—this dear son's

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future wife, her loved and loving daughter ; and it was not Lizzie Lorton of Greyrigg.

But in truth the mother did not think much about the son's love or future marriage at all. She trusted in God for guidance in so serious a matter: and she thought she knew his whole nature: so let the future shape itself as it best might. And for her own part Lizzie was as far removed from any thing like love for Ralph Wynter as even his mother could desire. Still—the singing-lessons were pleasant to her, and the family at home profited by the better temper consequent.

"I am so grateful to you, Mrs. Wynter!" said Mrs. Lorton one day when she called, and Ralph and Lizzie were, as usual, at the organ. "You have done wonders at our house; quite wonders. Lizzie is another girl altogether since you took her so kindly in hand; and really home is quite comfortable with her now. Else in general she is rather trying, I assure you, is poor Liz."

"Girls of her restless nature often are troublesome at home," Mrs. Wynter answered. "She will settle down in time; and all the sooner the more wholesome occupation she has."

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"The worst thing about her is that she is so unkind to the children," said Mrs. Lorton. "It makes me quite miserable sometimes, so that I do not know what to do; for of course poor Lizzie does not like to be spoken to-she is a great girl now, and cannot be treated like a baby-and of course I cannot see my own children ill-treated. So that it is sometimes very difficult to know how to manage, for I wish to do my duty both to her and to my own. But she is so cross to them that I cannot bear it, Mrs. Wynter; I cannot indeed; and then, when I am forced to speak, she fires up so that it is quite dreadful, and we have the most awful scenes you can imagine."

"I am very sorry to hear it," said Mrs. Wynter gently; "she tells me that she does not care for children in general."

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"No; how odd of her!" interrupted Mrs. Lorton. "I never knew a girl before who did not like children, and did not feel proud of being trusted with them. There must be something very wrong about her, Mrs. Wynter; don't you think so? It is so unnatural!"

"I suppose it will come," Mrs. Wynter an-

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swered. "There is a great difference as to the time in which the maternal instinct is awakened in girls. Some are young mothers from the first, and some only when they have children of their own; and then only to their own. Perhaps it is so with your daughter."

"Well, I don't know; it may be so," said Mrs. Lorton sighing. "I am no judge, I suppose, for I always loved them, little darlings! I loved my dolls like babies when I was a little girl; then every little angel I could get hold of; and then my own sweet poppets. I never remember the time when I did not love them. But poor Liz is different; she is so fierce, so passionate and hasty, I doubt if she will ever make a good mother, even when she has them of her own."

"She has good qualities if well trained," said Mrs. Wynter gently.

"Ah," returned Mrs. Lorton, again sighing, "I do not see them. The truth is, Mrs. Wynter,—though I dare say you do not know it, but perhaps you do—she is not over-fond of me; and though I have tried to make her like me, and I

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am sure I have always treated her like one of my own, yet we do not get on very well together. I dare say I do not understand her; and I know that she does not understand me."

"She is rather difficult to manage I must confess," Mrs. Wynter said. "She interests me because she is so full of power; and I would wish to see her, brought into the better way, poor child! else I cannot say that she is a style of young woman with whom I naturally sympathize."

"Nor I," answered Mrs. Lorton; "but she is a great deal better than she used to be, thanks to you and your good son; so let us hope she will improve altogether, and do what she ought to do before she dies. Ah I if only some one would marry her! if we could but get her well settled!"

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Here, as if involuntarily, she glanced through the half-opened door into the hall, at the upper end of which stood the chamber-organ, with Lizzie and Ralph deep in their last new fugue.

Mrs. Wynter caught the look and the thought accompanying. She smiled kindly, but nervously.

"Yes," she said, "some one like herself, strong, bold, and energetic."

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"Or else a very good man," Mrs. Lorton returned; "a man who could guide her because he was so good—a high-principled religious man. That is what I should like to see for poor Liz."

"Let us trust that her choice will be well ordered," said Mrs. Wynter with perceptible reserve; and Mrs. Lorton felt that she had shown her cards, and thereby damaged her chance of winning the great stake she almost pined to win for her unruly step-daughter.

The only consequence of her incaution at present resulting was that Mrs. Wynter, half unconsciously to herself, was somewhat cooler than usual to Lizzie, when, the lesson ended, leave-time began; and then, feeling that she was cooler and that it was a little unfair to the poor girl herself, she became more affectionate even than usual; conscience producing in her the same apparent inconsistency as caprice. It ended by Lizzie remaining at the rectory for the evening—Mrs. Wynter praying against her influence, as if she had been the Plague of Eliant embodied, and Ralph engaged in bending her to his will.

For though he was glad to see her improve in

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muse, yet he wanted more from her than even Gregorian chants justly rendered, or the organ-stops perfectly handled. As his "lay-deaconess" he wanted her to take the head class in his Sunday-school, to attend his weekly Bible-meetings, to preside at the clothing-club on days when he could not attend—he wanted her to visit the sick and read to them, under his directions, out of such books as he should select, to go about the parish as the young Lady Bountiful interested in her poorer neighbours, and to follow up heartily every scheme of usefulness he proposed. In a word he wanted to change her nature, and to make her a new creation. But pride and shyness are not the qualities

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which render Sunday-school teaching and sick-visiting congenial occupations, and Lizzie Lorton was both proud and shy.

"I will not, Mr. Wynter!" she said vehemently, when he pressed his views upon her. "I will not, even for you and Mrs. Wynter!"

"O yes you will!" answered Ralph with imperturbable good-humour. "You will do just as you ought, for my sake and my mother's—and for God's," in a graver key.

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"But I don't like it," she returned. "I hate going into the cottages. They smell so horribly, and the people are all so dirty; there is nothing that I dislike more."

"Well then you must do it because you dislike it—as an Act of Obedience," said Ralph; "you must do it till you learn to like it."

"I shall never like it, Mr. Wynter!"

"Yes you will. You will like it because it is good and your duty. We always come to like the good and our duty in the end."

"I am sure *I* don't!" said Lizzie, raising her brown eyes defiantly.

"Don't say that, Miss Lorton!" Ralph answered with a certain grave tenderness inexpressibly winning. "You like good things as well as any one else-and better than some."

"But I don't think going into those stupid cottages is such a very good thing to do," she returned in a softened key, with a faint smile on her lips.

"Then take my word for it, till you feel it to be so for yourself. Let me, your pastor, be your guide in this, and obey me, if only for the grace and beauty of obedience. Will you not do so?" gently.

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"It will give me real pleasure to see you take up these things, my dear child," put in Mrs. Wynter. "Would you not like to please me, my dear?"

"Yes," said Lizzie, looking down.

"Then do as my son wishes," said the invalid. "As your clergyman he has the right to direct you, and it is your duty to obey."

And Lizzie, after a little more persuasion, consented to all that was proposed; Ralph thus winning the greatest victory he had ever yet achieved, and bending to his will on matters that seemed vital to her character to oppose his most refractory and self-willed parishioner.

"Is she not a dear good girl, mother?" he asked warmly, when he came in after having taken her home in the evening. "I think she is so good—don't you?"

"No, dear, I don't think she is a good girl," replied Mrs. Wynter firmly; "I think she is an interesting and a most unhappy one, but not good—that is, not under the control of principle—merely governed by her emotions-passions or affections, as may chance."

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"I never knew you so severe, dearest mother!" Ralph said with a slightly heightened colour.

"No? Yet I trust that I am not uncharitable, my boy; I do not wish to be that to any one. Poor child! I am sure I pity her too intensely to feel any thing but tenderly towards her; but I cannot say that I think her specially good."

"I do," said Ralph. "Look how well she behaved this evening—look how gentle and compliant she was! No one could have been more sweet and amiable."

"We will do the best for her, and think the best of her possible," said Mrs. Wynter gently. "If we can do her good between us, we will; for it is of no use disguising that fact from ourselves, dear boy—she needs reforming and conversion."

"So do we all," said Ralph.

"Granted; but she more than most," persisted Mrs. Wynter with an anxious look.

And Ralph said no more. He had never seen his mother so tenacious of an unfavourable opinion. It distressed him more than he could understand; but he could change nothing; so he kept his thoughts to himself, and resolved to set

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Lizzie right in her esteem before he had done, and to force from her the admiration and esteem which he himself had given so voluntarily.

But it was not all the conversion of poor Lizzie into a saint of meekness with the young rector. There was the country to see, and show-places to which it was part of a

new comer's morality to go; but this was a section of morality which Ralph held with very loose-lying ends, preferring rather to visit the more distant houses in his own parish than to make acquaintance even with gaunt Helvellyn or great smooth-limbed Skiddaw. And as the parish was a wide one, it took a large amount of good walking before he had "done" them all; for he kept neither horse nor carriage—so had to walk; which however he enjoyed. He had never been on horseback in his life, and he thought a carriage for a clergyman almost sinfully luxurious. He would have bestridden a mule could he have found one, because that was clerical, and what the "old fellows" used to do; but failing the mule he used his own strength, and managed to get over the ground, and to see all his outliers in time.

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He did not always go alone; indeed the roads were bad to find sometimes, and sometimes the shorter cats across the fells were bewildering to say the least of it to a stranger; but as he generally had a companion, he had not as yet lost himself between the mist and the mire.

Nobody knew how to resist Ralph Wynter. Captain Lorton, the shyest man in the parish, who had been seen more than once to leave the high road, and entangle himself among the swamps of Yanwath Soughs rather than meet any one he knew and to whom he would have to say "good day," yet even he came under the spell of the new rector, and suffered his society without very much annoyance. Indeed he relaxed so far as to think him on the whole a harmless, well-bred, and well-informed young man.

"They might have had worse," he used to say at breakfast; Mrs. Lorton replying almost indignantly: "Might have had worse, Captain! what ever do you mean! I don't think we could have had better! What do you say, Liz?"

To which Lizzie, caught in a trap, not liking to speak slightingly of her new friends, and not

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liking to uphold her stepmother in her raptures, would answer coldly, "Yes, he is a very nice person, but there is no use in being so dreadfully enthusiastic about him."

A half-hearted partisanship that satisfied no one, and not unfrequently ended in a quarrel between the mother and daughter.

Mark Dowthwaite was another of Ralph's walking companions; and invaluable as a mountain guide and local gazetteer. The two were getting upon quite friendly terms

together, for all that the one was an Oxonian and a well-born gentleman, and the other was only a local schoolman and the son of a rough peasant proprietor. But as Ralph's idea of the Christian life included absolute equality of social bearing, while demanding as absolute spiritual supremacy, between pastor and flock, it mattered little to him whether Mark spoke with a strong Cumberland accent or no, or wore hobnailed shoes, and trousers which a London lackey would have rejected. He was his parishioner and therefore his charge; a Christian and therefore his equal; he was pious and of pure life, and he was to be fellow-servant with himself in the same holy Mo-

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ther Church; wherefore he was his fit companion by all the things which constitute essential fitness, thought Ralph, never shrinking from the practical issues of his own principles.

Sometimes in his walks he fell in with Lizzie and the young Lortons—Lizzie fretting over her task, and resenting "being made into a nurse," as she called it. And though not fretting so bitterly as before, and certainly gentler to the little ones, yet still discontented with her actual life, and longing for that vague unknown with as much yearning if with less anguish. She had got a few steps nearer to the Gentle Life than used to be of old; but she was not intrinsically changed. She was improved; but improvement is not reconstruction.

And when Ralph used to fall in with her and her troop of noisy torments, for very joy of the diversion she would meet him with such warmly-expressed pleasure as would have justified him in thinking that she showed more than only pleasure. Had any other girl looked or said one half of what Lizzie Lorton allowed herself to look and say, it would have been an unmistakable confession of

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love. Coming from her, it meant, simply that she was glad to see him because she was bored with the children, and he would talk to her and prevent their teasing her.

Her brightened eyes and frank address at times made the blood come into Ralph's calm face with a force equal to her own; but the thrill that passed through him at such moments was delusive—he had yet to learn what Lizzie Lorton's love was like, both in its power and its despair.

For himself, had he been a different man he would have been confessedly in love with her; but his acquaintance was too young yet for the possibility of a feeling which was to be with him one of long, slow, cautious growth, the product of esteem and

sympathy and fitness all combined. So at least he always said, and so he honestly believed.

"At all events," he used to say to himself a little more frequently than seemed necessary for such absolute certainty, "at all events I am not in love with Miss Lorton. We are very good friends—no more. And she is wonderfully beautiful, no doubt; only that ought not to count, and never

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would with me; and though her stepmother complains of her temper, and my mother speaks of her so pityingly—how I wish she would not speak of her as she does!—yet I have always found her mild and reasonable, and quite as easily influenced as many others who pass for models of gentleness. Look how she took up music, just to please me, and how regular in her attendance at the school, and how sweetly she goes about among the poor because I have asked her! What more can any one want of her? Women are so hard upon girls! They expect them to be women before their time, and make no allowance for the fervour of youth."

The fervour of youth! Ralph thought in set phrases, as we all do; but what did he know of the fervour of youth?—he as chastened and self-controlled as any old anchorite feeding on roots and spring-water in a cave!

"No; I will not have Miss Lorton run down," he would then think; "she is a very sweet creature, and I like to see her dark eyes flash and her pale cheeks flame up at the least emotion. We want all patterns of human nature to work with;

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and Miss Lorton has her duties which only she can perform, and which she would not do half so well if she was what my dear mother would have her. I judge her more calmly, and from a broader stand-point. As a man accustomed to organization I can see fitness where women cannot; and the Church can make good use of that ardent life, if my mother and Mrs. Lorton cannot."

This then was the sum of the young rector's interest in his parishioner; but nothing more than this, and nothing different. " Nothing whatever!" said Ralph Wynter aloud as be walked home in the moonlight after having met Lizzie Lorton by the sick-bed of poor old Betty Hodgin, where he had made her remain during his visit and take part in his prayers, then had accompanied her home and stayed tea at Greyrigg—spending the evening with her at the pianoforte.

As for marrying, if ever the subject crossed his mind—which it would sometimes—he did not suppose he should ever marry; certainly not during his mother's lifetime, and not while he had so much on his hands as at present. A parish to reform was work enough for any mail; he need not add

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to it the trouble of rearranging his household. Besides, a clergyman was better unmarried. He could give himself with more entire devotion to his duties, and be more useful the less he was domestic. No, he would never marry; and when he thought this he would fling himself into his work with increased energy, stirring up the contrite and rebuking the dissolute, comforting the sick and warming the cold, till it was indeed as he said—no time was left for love-making, and his parish absorbed all his hours and his energies.

He was getting slowly, very slowly, what might be called almost popular in the place; but it was a popularity purely personal and coupled with a public opposition as strong as ever. They liked the man, but they hated his ways, and would have none of them, they said grimly.

"Langthut was Langthut, an' ne'er a danged foreigner sold mak it owt else, coom what wad," said Jobby Dowthwaite, the stanchest conservative and most uncompromising adversary of change in the district.

On the other hand, Mark, Jobby's favourite son, was his friend; Wilkin Yanwath, a rising

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man, made him his model; Luke Hogarth, a risen man, was prepared to indorse all new ways, simply because they were new; and Captain Lorton, the only gentleman, would give his countenance to any scheme proposed, if only he was left alone and was not required to make public demonstration of his adherence. Still, the tide was dead against Ralph in all parish matters; and noisy were the speculations on Saturday nights at the Nag's Head as to whether 't'new mon or t'auld ways wad bet in t' long-run,"—and whether the rector would carry the parish without a vestry, or persuade the vestry to back him.

The churchwardens for the year were Jobby Dowthwaite and Luke Hogarth; so that influence in that direction was a little neutralized. Neutralized only, and by no means equalized; for Jobby was "king of Wastdale," and Luke was only a new man, whose grandfather had been a hind, and whose father had been but little better. So,

though Luke had six times more "brass" than Jobby, he was just a nobody in comparison with him. Still, even nobodies count for something in a hand-to-hand social fight; and as

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churchwarden, he was not without value in the rector's camp, for all that Jobby Dowthwaite used to call him a "daft, slape, slithery cuddy, wha's lugs were as lang as his purse, an' langer nor his schooling by mony a mile—that were they!"

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CHAPTER V.

THE KING OF WASTDALE.

NEIGHBOURS and companions, Luke Hogarth of the How and Joseph Dowthwaite of Dale Head were by no means hearty friends. Representing the two grand divisions of mind—belief in the past and hope in the future—conservatism and progress—they were not likely to be friends in the true meaning of the word. The utmost that could be hoped for was, that they would keep up the appearance of good fellowship in social life, and not allow their differences to breed division.

Of the two, Dowthwaite was, as has been said, infinitely the more influential man; Luke was liked personally as a hearty good-tempered fellow, free with his money, a bold rider, and a keen sportsman; but Luke had got a certain taint of freethinking and radicalism not well looked on at Langthwaite, where conduct was independent, but

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opinions tightly shackled. Had he not been heard to doubt the efficacy of infant baptism? and did he not always vote for the blue, and against the yellow and the Lonsdales at election times? And beside these two drawbacks to solid influence, he had the character of affecting now things and strange schemes; what we should call speculative and progressive perhaps, but what his neighbours stigmatised "as daftly venturesome, and oot o' t' reet road a'together." And, as the climax, though a Langthwaite man he was a newly-made man, and had only of late years held a rood of land as his own.

"Aye, risen free t' muck, as ane mud say," was JobbyDowthwaite's oft-repeated expression. "His grandfather was nobbut hind to my father, hired at t' scatty fair wi' a lock o' strae round's hat on him; and what! here's Luke yonder, that I can mind ne'est

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thing 'to a life beggar-brat, in puir auld Cloudsdale's hoose, and Cloudsdale's dochter on't parish."

Revolutions like this were rare in Langthwaite, and there was always something of a sore feeling against Luke in consequence; as if he and his

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father had destroyed old Cloudsdale, and were living on his rain. Instead of which, drink and idleness had undone the one, and pluck and speculation had made the other.

But that same spirit of speculation which had made Luke, and his father before him, seemed now not unlikely to unmake him again; for it was well known that he had lost money in a venture out at Whitehaven, and that now he had put every farthing he could command into quite a new concern—the lead-mine lately opened on Haverbrack.

This too was an unpopular thing. The sinking of the mine at all had been a great offence to the dalespeople. It had brought a body of strangers into the district, Irish and Cornish men chiefly, whom they regarded with ill-will and contempt. Neither did they like this interference with the soil and introduction of a new industry. There were slate-quarries on Styebarrow at the head of Langthwaite; but that was another matter altogether. These were worked by their own men—good Cumbrian and dalesfolk every one of them—brought up to the trade like cloggers or wailers, or any other handicraftsmen; they knew

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them all, man and boy, and their fathers and grandfathers before them; they followed the same customs, spoke the same tongue-were, in fact, sons of the same soil and brothers together. The statesmen were as proud of their quarrymen's feats as of their own; and would pass it round from one to the other at the public-houses how Jemmy Greenup had brought down his forty load for a bottle of rum extra, and how "lile Bob Atkison had bet t' best mon among them a'."

The slate-quarries were their own, and they understood all about "Peg" and "Tom," and "London" and "Country," as well as the quarry-men themselves, and felt quite a personal and patriotic pride when the monster-slab from their own Styebarrow quarries took the prize in the great London Exhibition. But these lead-mines were new to them—though there weremany throughout the lake-district—having to be wrought with new works never localized here before; and the new men working them , were foreigners, or next door to it, and Langthwaite could not away with them anyhow.

To hear them talk one would have imagined

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that these lead-mines on Haverbraek Fells represented all the iniquity of the earth, and would surely lead to the destruction of Langthwaite; and' that the rough hard-working men, living soberly with their wives when they had them, in the little huts by the mine, were savages or criminals, and in nowise to be regarded as fellow-countrymen and honest Christians.

But Luke Hogarth was one of the largest shareholders, and confidently expected that he should make a princely fortune out of the concern; when he would keep the best stable in all Cumberland, he said, and have a pack of hounds which the Prince of Wales could not match.

"Daft fule!" said Jobby Dowthwaite pityingly; "he'll git t' bailies into his hoose afore he has t'nags in's stable, I'se warran' me!"

And yet Jobby Dowthwaite himself had to do with, these same mines - these "danged Blue Johnnies," as he called the miners, and whom he hated, as representing the future ruin of England by underground: workings, and the consequent neglect of land and beasts. And this was how it came about.

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Jobby's sixth son, Matthew, or Mather by ordinary pronunciation-once clerk to one Tyson, a sharebroker in London, but now sharebroker himself in a small way-had entered into quite large dealings on his own account with these Haverbrack shares. It was noticeable, in the face of all that was to come, that Jobby had strongly opposed his son's settling in London at all, and had still more strongly opposed his choice of a profession. He had wished him to become a tailor "to his trade;" but Mather, who had always had a weakness for gentility, above all things coveted the name of a "London gentleman."He had heard wild stories of fortunes made out there by Capel Court; and nothing would serve him but to throw his dice too on the floor of the Exchange, and see what Fortune would send. At present she had sent but a flimsy, precarious, and not always scrupulously clean living; but now she seemed as if about to relent, and the Haverbrack Fells looked not unlikely to become the, young Wastdale lad's El Dorado of the future. Not that Jobby ever believed a word of the wealth said to be lying hidden beneath those rugged

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gags. Nothing grieved him more than that son Mather should have mixed himself up with such "trash;" and he would far rather have seen him herding the kine, or shepherding on the fells, than riding in his carriage and four if bought with Haverbrack lead. And yet the new superintendent was to be lodged at Dale Head; and Jobby, the uncompromising enemy of the whole affair, was to be landlord and host to the head man himself.

The first superintendent had turned out badly. Regarded as a kind of outlaw or Esau, who, if his hand was not against every man, deserved that every man's hand should be against him, his life had been rough and lonely. He had been a weak-lunged, mild-mannered young man; and the dampness and solitude tried him sorely. So, seeking to drive away rheumatism and dullness together by means of the whisky-bottle, he fell under the curse of the north country, and drank himself into his grave without much delay in the process. Asa kind of help against a repetition of the same thing, Matthew had asked for a lodging at Dale Head for the new man, being anxious for the success of the venture in all its outlets, as he

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had speculated so largely therein. And after due consultation with Aggy woman, his wife, not disinclined to tarn an honest penny whenever she had the chance -if so be that it was honest, mind ye—and after taking the opinion of shy daughter Elcy, who "skriked even oot" when she heard tell of a strange man in their own house—Jobby, to please son Matthew, and maybe do him a good tarn, though he was a fool to venture his brass on such madness, consented reluctantly enough: and for the first time in his life was to receive a paying guest at the farm—Ainslie Forbes (that was the name of the new man as was to be, as Jobby phrased it), the superintendent of the Haverbraok mines, whose coming was daily looked for now, and whose future bearing was almost as ninth a matter of speculation as Ralph Wynter's had been a few months age.

No man in or about Langthwaite was so much respected as Jobby Dowthwaite of Dale Head. The safest and longest-headed man in the parish, he could command a large following which way seever he moved. It was not that he was rich, and so had the influence of a capitalist and large

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employer; and it was not that he was learned, and so had the influence of mind and knowledge: but it was because he represented the old state of things in their highest culmination; because he was one of the pure old Cumberland stock, with a pedigree dating farther back than many of our nobility can boast of—his forbears having held

that identical estate in Wastdale ever since the time of Edward the First; it was because he bore a character absolutely unblemished both for caution and honesty; in a word, it was because he was the typical dalesman of the lake-country, of old line-age, of unencumbered estate, clannish, prejudiced, conservative, and shrewd, hard-headed, upright, and stiff-necked.

Langthwaite was the world to Jobby, and Wastdale was his kingdom. Educated at the grammar-school, as were his sons and his brothers—for the school which had taught a martyr, a bishop, and a poet was good enough for the Dowthwaites, said he-staying there till he had got up to a very fair point in the Classics, and then leaving to help his father in the farm, there had been no seeing the great world for Jobby, no rub-

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bing off his country rust in towns, no sharpening of wits against the keen edges of Londoners and the like. Such as he was, he was by nature and the shaping of local example; yet such as he was he was well content to be, and thought the world had few superior to him and his kind. Too proud to be ambitious of any thing beyond his inheritance, and too self-satisfied to think that he could be improved, he had no word hard enough to fling at the new order of things every where abounding. If he could have put back the dial-hand of time fifty or a hundred years, to what he called the good old times, he would have thought he was saving England and mankind from irretrievable disaster. He had faith only in the proved and past; the untried and the new were, by the necessity of things, evil.

Nothing could have induced him to have employed a steam-plough or any new-fashioned farm-implement whatever. Steam was all very well for railroads and ships; but even then he would rather have had the good old four-in-hand, with cheery Tom Preston for the driver and gallant Arnold for the guard, and the white sails

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fluttering to the breeze under Captain Bee, of Whitehaven; but steam upon land was like ballooning and agricultural chemistry—folly and wickedness together; and no farm could prosper, said Jobby, in his slow sententious voice, that put kettles and wheels in the place of men and horses.

"Land bides a deal o' humouring," he used to say; "and it's tied to reason that a senseless machine canna du what a mon can, wi' here a howk, an' thier a howk, and fettling oop ae place an' smooring doun anither, an' siccan like bits o' care."

And what he thought with respect to farming he thought with respect to every other circumstance of modern life. Education, beyond what could be had at the grammar-school, was the rain of a true Langthwaite man; libraries, mechanics' institutes, and lectures were downright unmanly; so was the new fashion of the beard he shaved once a-week, on Saturdays, and who wanted more?—he would have scorned to have "softened his tongue," but spoke the broadest dialect as a matter of pride; volunteering was mere "tomfoolery an' jack-a-dandy play—why couldn't the danged fules be content wi' 't yeomanry if they mud play at

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soldiering?" he used to say disdainfully, especially when Luke Hogarth, the captain of the Caldton eorps, in his gay suit with the sprig of heather for his crest, came into the Nag's Head a little more swaggering than usual, as if he had been a colonel of the line at the very least.

He did not believe half the grand things said of chemistry and astronomy ; and indeed thought all this peeping and prying into the secrets of earth and heaven downright. blasphemous. Liebig was his special horror. "I wad like to see him wi' 's batteries, and his man're in 's coat-tail pocket, on *my* land; I wad gie him sic a dressing as wad mak him laugh on't wrang side o't mouth on him for a month o' Sundays, I'se warran' me," said Jobby Dowthwaite, as quietly as if he was summing up his score at the Nag's Head—on Saturday nights generally a pretty long one.

Then as for these new mines: mining was all very well in Cornwall and Derbyshire, which were made by God to be mining countries, poor things; in Borrowdale too, for wad, on Caldbeck Fells and at Coniston-but a mine at Langthwaite was an

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abomination, and an irreligious perversion of natural uses. So with the new rector's plans for the restoration of the church, the creation of a full-voiced choir, the establishment of a Sunday-school, and the changes he had made in the times of service—Jobby would have none of them.

"What had done for Langthut sixty year coom next Martinmas wid auld Laverack, wad du for Langthut noo; and for his part he wadn't gie the vally of a brass farden for any o't new fandanglements."

But he was rather "baffled," as he used to say, meaning perplexed, on this point, for Mark upheld the new man heartily; and Jobby, though he had his principles to

support and his character to maintain, did not like to oppose very sternly what Mark affected. For was not that tall square-shouldered young man, with his sandy-coloured hair, high cheek-bones, light blue eyes, and straight Scandinavian face, next thing to a parson himself? and had he not "leave then to say how parson's wark suld be manished ?" said Jobby kindly, looking at him with grave tenderness when Aggy woman would have put him down as

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a mere daft lad who did not know his own mind.

The eldest son, young Jobby as he was sometimes called, though a grave middle -aged man now—or sometimes "Mr. Josep" by the girls, not to be too familiar—kept the middle way; holding to his father's conservatism by temperament, but, feeling the onward course of things to be too strong for him, yielding with the stolid acquiescence of a fatalist. These differences of opinion at Dale Head were maizitained without bitterness. The Dowthwaites had never been a brawling family, though Aggy woman was by no means of a meek or long-suffering temper; still, the quiet, slow, dry patience and justice of Jobby kept all effervescences well covered down, and "fratching" was a thing almost unknown among them. And at no time would the father have contended with Mark, his pride and favourite for his heartsome humour and manly purity—his "lile Benjamin" as he used to call him, destined to fulfil his one great point of ambition—that of hearing a son of his preach in the old church as the "Reverend" Dowthwaite.

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As the family had grown up, and the father's power of setting his sons well forward in the world had improved, it was curious to mark the successive points to which their various callings had risen. Thus-the eldest remaining at home to take the estate after his father, as all the eldest Dowthwaites had done from time immemorial, though the land was not entailed-the second had gone as a draper's assistant to Liverpool; the third was a Life Guardsman; the fourth was in Australia; the fifth was captain of a Newcastle collier; Matthew, or Mather, was a sharebroker in London, as we have seen—more's the pity, thought Jobby, not without reason ; John was a surgeon at Kendal ; Anthony was in a lawyer's office at Carlisle; and Mark had been to St. Bees, and was to be a priest.

"Ay! lile Benjamin's gitten t' bettermost mess on' em a', "Jobby used to say laughing, when speaking with his ' wife of how their lads were "fettling."

Mrs. Dowthwaite was as proud as any old Roman or Jewish mother of these nine stalwart sons of hers, not one of whom stood under six

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feet or weighed less than fourteen stone; and frequent were her self- glorifications, when comparing her powers with those of other women, that she had "niver made a slip, niver lost a bairn, and brought nobbut folk worth their saut and porridge into t' warld." And yet not one of them all was his father's "marras" or equal; for even now in his seventy-fifth year Jobby was a better man than most of the youngsters in the valley.

Tall (he was over six feet two), gaunt, lean-ribbed, made up of sinews and muscle without a superfluous ounce of flesh on his big bones, capable of an immense amount of privation and fatigue, he used to ascribe his wonderful health and vigour to the fact that he "niver ped a brass farden for doctor's stuff in 's life;" though he yearly paid one doctor's fee—sixpence to Geordie Bird, or to whomsoever might be the then surgeon at Langthwaite, for "bluiding in t' spring time"—Jobby's one hygienic rule, and his only one. Even when he once hurt his hand badly—injuring the bone so that "necrosis" was , the result, causing him pain enough to have "mashed

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oop" any one else-he would have neither Geordie Bird nor Aggy "to mak an auld wife on him;" but smeared it with sheep - salve only, saying, "Nay, what's gude for t' sheep maun be gude for t' shepherd;" and to that faith he stuck resolutely, and bore his pain, and let his bone die, and then come away in splinters, with an obstinate firmness that would have been heroic had it not been stupid.

There was a dash of the savage in Jobby. His power of endurance ; his temperance in matters of eating—we will not speak of the drink, but then he could drink enough to "coup ower" half a dozen other men, and ride steadily home when he had done; his quick suspicion especially of all strangers; the instinct of concealment which went very near to untruthfulness ; and his keenness in bargaining which barely stopped this side of honesty, though in all transactions not matters of bargain and the trial of wits, reliable and honest to a proverb—all were more or less the characteristics of a savage whose main art of life is self-defence. Perhaps traditions of the time when every stranger was an enemy, and a man

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had to defend himself against wrong and robbery as much by ready wit as by strength of arm, still ran in his blood; but however got, there it was; and Jobby Dowthwaite's

standing boast was, that he never knew the man who could "fell" him in wrestling, in shearing, in clipping, in drinking, or "bet him" in crag-climbing, or at a bargain.

Then there was the only daughter to complete the group—a girl named Alice and called Elcy—a wild shy thing seldom seen, but known throughout the country-side as "a gay fine lass is Jobby's Elcy"—one man only seeming to see more than the rest, namely, Wilkin Yanwath, the tailor and draper of Langthwaite.

But Wilkin Yanwath deserves a special notice, as in some sort also a representative of north-country circumstance.

The Yanwaths had once been the great lords of Langthwaite, holding the whole vale as their hunting-ground, with wild boars and red deer for their game; and sharing the more with the monks, to whom, from time to time, certain lands and privileges had been given as one or other

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lord had been penitent or pious. They had been like the Romelis or the De Taillebois; but now all that great past was mere name and tradition, no more. The Yanwaths had died out. Certain of the nobility had incorporated among them female heiresses of the younger branches, and the like; but the family, as a power and an individuality, was destroyed; and had been destroyed these six hundred years and more. There now only remained the Yanwath vaults, and the Yanwath tomb with its stone effigies of a knight and a lady, called Adam and Eve by the people in the dale, Yanwath Soughs and Yanwath Holme, Yanwath Intake, and the farmhouse still called Yanwath Hall—which stood at various points in the parish as landmarks of how far and wide had been the Yanwath holdings. But the lands had long ago been sold and parcelled out to different owners.

The Dowthwaites had the croft known as the Yanwath Intake, and a poor bit of starved "leck" it was too, a mere bit of fell waste; the Lortons had Yanwath Hohne as one of their meadows Yanwath Soughs, over against the

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Plosh, was any body's who chose to go snipe-shooting among its swamps; and the old Hall was the Stalkers' farm, with what had probably once been my lady's bower now a pigstye. So that Wilkin had but a barren inheritance of it, if he could claim any inheritance at all even in his name.

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For it was by no means proved that he was one of the old family. He had no title-deeds nor registers—merely tradition; which however was quite as decisive to the Langthwaite folk as any thing else, and settled the question as authoritatively as Domesday would have done. It had a certain effect on the young man himself in making him rather uppish and conceited; and in giving him a secret feeling both of wrong done to him and of latent importance whenever he passed by any of the holdings mentioned.

"All that should have been mine;" he would say a little grandly, eschewing the broad dialect and speaking "fine Cumberland," like Luke; and "if ivery ane bed their ain, Wilkin Yanwath wad be t' first mon in t' coonty," Jobby would often remark—Jobby respecting the tradition

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which made the young tailor and draper the lineal descendant of the great baronial lords.

However—good always coming with bad—if this shadowy inheritance of past grandeur made Wilkin uppish and conceited, it also made him try to be a scholar, and kept him out of low ways. He was a very fair specimen of the new north-country man. He had been away at Liverpool to learn his business, and how to bring the art of tailoring to perfection in Langthwaite; and at Liverpool he had rubbed off a great deal of Langthwaite rust, and had learnt many things useful for his after-life. He had learnt to respect money and to desire it, as well as to cut a "genteel fit ;" he had learnt to know that education is a grand thing, and helps a man forward next thing to money; he had learnt that Langthwaite was "terrible backard," and so was prepared to welcome Ralph Wynter, and go with him hand and heart loyally; and he had learnt to wear a beard, to dress like a gentleman, to bow with an air, to speak intelligible English with only a strong if close and affected accent, and to keep himself sober—which was not after, the Langthwaite pat-

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tern of life unfortunately. So that if he was conceited, he was an advance on the ignorant old type; being indeed essentially a product of the Mechanics' Institute movement, and all that this implies.

Thus Jobby Dowthwaite, Luke Hogarth, and Wilkin Yanwath were all representative men, the like of whom are to be found in every dale and village of the lake-country.

If Wilkin Yanwath thought any thing about Elcy Dowthwaite, he had enough of northern caution to hold his tongue and bide his time; and as yet did nothing more overt

than often drop in at Dale Head on his way to or from Caldton, though the dale was a mile long, and in winter time often almost impassable. And as there was only Grace Hogarth to joke the girl, and as she, for her own purposes, thought it best not to be "overforward with her nonsense," the thing did not get wind; and Elcy's one solitary lover, if lover he could be called, remained a secret to all concerned; and to no one more than to shy unkempt Elcy herself.

Shy and unkempt indeed l for, living in the

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wildest 'part of the parish, Elcy had no inducement to smarten herself up, and no opportunity for getting rid of her shyness. She would run right away up the fells if she saw any stranger coming up the dale; and if by chance Miss Lorton walked over to Dale Head when visiting at the How, Elcy would steal into the dairy behind the kitchen, whence she would peep at the "lady" through the cracks in the door, in an agony of dread lest she should be discovered by her mother, and called out to say " good-day" to Miss Lorton. She was in the wild-colt state as yet—all starts and skittish troubles; but she had the makings in her of a douce grave woman when the tumult of her young blood had passed, and years and experience had sobered her. In person she was the picture of rustic health and vigour, well-grown, high-coloured, clear-skinned; but she often had a cough in the winter, and was "fashed" with swollen glands in her neck, which were hard and tender. In appearance at home she was like a dirty little beggar-girl; but on market-days and Sundays she was better dressed than Grace Hogarth.

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In the great question of the new rector Elcy had of course nothing to say: she was but a young lass yet, and had few opinions beyond the best way of "flying clapbread," or the exact amount of fire wanted for the efficient cooking of porridge and girdle-cakes. But Aggy woman, the mother—a buxom, powerful woman, with a will of her own and a way of her own, with which woe betide him who should dare to interfere!—was not quite satisfied with the look of matters. Inclined by nature to the Methody persuasion, and earnestly if somewhat narrowly pious, she was one of those who care more for unction than for form—who would rather take the Bible and their own unassisted interpretation for their guide, than the Church and its authorized teaching; and who place greater store by comfortable texts than by chants and stately services. But she too thought that if son Mark went one way in church matters, it would be hardly seemly for her to make a blare for the other side. So she contented herself with flings and jeers at home—not always of the mildest character—and wiselike held her peace to the world outside.

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Thus the Dowthwaite opposition had been as yet somewhat softened in action; and even Jobby himself—hard to please by stranger merits as he was—could not help being taken with the frankness, the friendliness, the absence of class-pride, and the single-hearted purity of motive and piety visible in all that the young rector said or did. And yet, mindful of that old auspicious instinct of his, he was not quite sure that this was all as genuine as it looked to be, but kept his eyes and ears wide open for the time when the wolf should show his black paws through the sheep's white fleece, and when Ralph Wynter should clearly betray that he was seeking his own advantage somehow—Jobby could not exactly see how he could find it, but that was no matter—in the improvements and changes projected.

"I'se churchwarden for this year, when a's said an' dune," he said chuckling; "and I'll stand by t' auld ways if I'se rived wi' wild horses for't. Langthut's Langthut, and I'se Jobby Dowthut; and Mr. Wynter 'll hae a tough job to mak us owt else, I'se ensure him, when t' time comes to try."

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CHAPTER VI.

"I AM SO GLAD THAT YOU HAVE COME."

THE great out-of-door pleasure at Langthwaite was boating. There was not enough society to make up picnic parties-those pleasantest of all pleasant gatherings-but there was the lake if not the company, the sweet bit of tangled undergrowth and wild flowers known as Maiden's Holm, rising in the middle of the lake—the only island it had—the mountains and the woods and the birds and the clouds and the pure blue sky overhead. And these are things to be always loved, either with companions or without.

Among those who most delighted in the lake was Lizzie Lorton. She had a small boat of her own, a tiny outrigger sharp and narrow, fit only for a sheltered river, and decidedly unfit for such a lake as Langmere, where the winds blew strongly from the open south, driving up quite a sea with

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crested billows and flying foam and long white "rakes" down the sides, and where the gusts came down the gullies to the north with a sudden treachery of violence that made sailing a service of certain disaster, and rendered even rowing at times unsafe. An unreliable lake too—which in less than half-an-hour would have changed from an

unrippled sheet of glass to a tossing turbulence unsafe for any thing much smaller or narrower than a coal-barge—no one felt quite certain of what the heat phase of water-life would be; so that, what with violence and uncertainty, it was as little suited for Lizzie Lorton's pretty "Lily of Langmere" as if it had been the Atlantic itself.

Every one in the place predicted mischief to Miss Lorton from that outlandish skiff of hers and Jobby Dowthwaite had been so much " putten oot o' t' way" when she first had it, that he had ridden over to Greyrigg to remonstrate against the foolhardiness of the girl, and to urge the Captain to "brak it oop into firewood, afore it brak oop Miss yonder into worms' meat."

But Captain Lorton contented himself with telling Lizzie she was very rash and venturesome,

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and she had better mind what old Dowthwaite said; and Mrs. Lorton had no influence whatever, except to confixm the, thing she opposed. So the girl held her. own wayward will, and went on the lake in her small outrigger on days when those who watched her declared their hearts turned over to see her.

She was a good oarswoman though, and managed her little cockleshell with grace and dexterity. Painted white and blue, with blue cushions and blue and white oars, it was the daintiest little skiff to be seen any where; the very ideal of a boat for a Lady of the Lake, or Maiden of the Mere, or any other fine-sounding term chosen to be applied to a young girl sculling alone. But for all its prettiness it was horribly dangerous; and almost the only sensible thing that Lizzie Lorton did on principle was resolutely to refuse to take any one with her, save on days when the halcyon might have built her nest on the water, and no ripple stronger than that which was made by a leaping fish or the dipping wing of a wild bird would have broken against it.

It was on such a day as this, in the begin-

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ning of May, calm, breathless, even, with the lake stretching away like a moveless sheet of azure before them, giving back the reflections of fell and rock as bright and solid as if cut out of stone, with the shadows lying on the hills like purple veils doubled against the yellow sunshine, and only a few white curl-clouds left hanging tenderly against the sky—on a day of absolute serenity and almost as absolute certainty—that Lizzie and Grace Hogarth were seen by Ralph Wynter going down the field to the Greyrigg

landing-place; Lizzie designing to row Grace to the foot of the lake, as she did sometimes as a rare treat, in her fairy outrigger.

If ever the Langmere Lily was safe on Langthwaite water, she was safe to-day. No wild blast blew up from the sea—no treacherous gusts swept down the hill-side rents—the kelds, those great black oil-like patches seen on calm days only, were on the lake—Green Coom, the great weather-gauge at Langthwaite, stood out as sharp and clear as if close at hand, so that the white Nuts of the miners, the gray heap of refuse flung down at the base of Falcon Crag, and the white dine of the bounding Hartlop beck coming from

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Hartlop Tarn, and worked for the uses of the mine, could be all as distinctly seen as in a photograph; and Lizzie felt that she was justified in taking Grace to-day; sure that no mishap could arise before they got down their four miles to the Wastdale landing at the foot, when, if it did change, and if a storm should come on—which was almost impossible—she could scull herself home easily, going before the waves as she had often done before, as if the Lily had wings to her hidden feet.

Her calculations were a little disturbed when Ralph came down to the pier, and announced his intention of going with them. He did not ask permission—that was not his way; but quietly told Miss Lorton he was going to make a third, with that smiling, innocent, friendly audacity of his which the strictest prude could not call impertinent, nor the sourest-blooded resent. And when she objected—urging the small size of the boat, never fit at the best of times to carry more than two, its unsafe build, and her dislike to take any one, not thinking it right to risk others' lives if she chose to risk her own —he told her she

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might save herself the trouble of objecting—he meant to go; and he would go; so would she and Miss Hogarth please to get in and settle themselves? or should he get in first, as she had to row? And after some laughing altercation it was arranged as the young rector wished, and the frail skiff received its burden.

Lizzie looked supremely beautiful to-day. Her life of better occupation was doing her infinite good. Her music lessons and her quiet talks at the rectory; her visits to the sick, into which she was throwing all her strong sympathies and purer affections; her friendship with Ralph, whom she was getting to like better than she had ever liked any one before, with no mad passion, no wild reveries, no sick longing of jealous hope nor

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pain of jealous dread, but calmly and wholesomely as one likes one's best brother; Mrs. Wynter's tender motherliness and holy teaching; and her own spiritual and prayerful endeavours after a higher life and nobler aims—all the new mental conditions of these later days were gently filling up the vacuum of her life if not fulfilling her wildest dreams; and her face was taking on itself the

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better impress of her spirit. She looked quite happy and radiant as she bent to her oars, lithe and graceful and supple as only the young can be; as radiant in her way as Grace, and with more soul; as happy as Ralph himself, and with more power.

But then it was one of those bright and living days of spring which influence every one to vague and tender joy—even the rough dalesmen, who called it "a bonny day," and thought "what a gay grand thing t'wad be for Langthut if t'crops 'ud grew for iver wid sic a sky"—even Grace, without a grain of romance in her composition—even Ralph, all of whose poetry had gone from nature to the church, and who cared more about the pattern of a lectern than he did about the loveliest bit of scenery, under heaven. And if it touched even them, how much more, then, Lizzie, open as she was to all emotional influences, and on whom the subtle harmonies of spring had ever had a special power!

"My happiness will come in the spring tame," she had always said to herself—and she did not look beyond.

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So the little party weighing the light skiff low into the blue water was a happy one, though not boisterous nor noisy: and Lizzie rowed gallantly down to the foot of the lake, without the slightest danger or inconvenience-the halcyon day continning as calm as when they started.

At the foot they all got out: Grace to go home, and Ralph to go to Dale Head to speak with Jobby about that "restoration" so abhorrent to him, and Lizzie for some roots of the sweet-gale which grew on the low-lying land thereabouts with almost southern luxuriance. And when she had got what she wanted, and a boat-load of wild flowers as well, she turned back to the skiff, intending to row back alone, according to her favourite custom.

The cushions had slipped aside, and one had broken from its fastening and had fallen on to the floor of the boat.

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"Look there, you clumsy girl, what you have done!" cried Lizzie pleasantly to Grace, who had been the culprit.

A few weeks ago she would have spoken in a very different tone had such a misadventure hap-

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pened; but, as her stepmother said, it was quite wonderful how her temper had improved of late, and really she was getting quite a mild-mannered pleasant girl!

Ralph, eager to do never so small a service for her, jumped into the boat before her to arrange her pretty toy fit for her reception, he said, while she, standing a little back on the shore, watched him with kindly eyes, laughing at his gallantry, and yet pleased. But the skiff was such a frail sensitive creature that only the impetus of his step set it free from the beach where it was but loosely drawn up; and in a moment it had drifted into deep water.

Ralph knew about as much of rowing as he did of cricketing or hunting; which, as we know, was nothing: but he knew that the oars had to be put into the water and taken out again—in which laudable endeavour he heroically set himself to succeed, the boat all the while drifting farther away.

Grace and Lizzie stood on the shingle watching him; Lizzie with her earnest eyes a little anxious as she saw how awkward he was, and how

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he swayed the boat to and fro with his sudden movements, but smiling to him all the same, and looking Friendly and sympathetic.

He shipped one oar all right, and was manoeuvring with the other, when he let it slip out of his hand; and it fell overboard; making tumult enough as it splashed into the calm lake, but filling just under the bows, so that he had but to lean over to recover it. Hastily—perhaps a little annoyed at his want of deftness, with Lizzie Lorton who could manage a boat as he could a pen, watching him—he leant over for the oar; but his sudden lurch capsized the boat; and though she righted herself again, and did not turn keel uppermost as she looked about to do, Ralph Wynter was thrown into the lake, in over thirty feet of water.

In an instant the girls saw that he could not swim. Striking about wildly, floundering here and there, calling for help—his presence of mind quite gone—he was

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drifting rapidly into the middle of the lake—drifting to inevitable and swift destruction. Grace stood still, paralysed with terror; while Lizzie ran forward and was

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already instep deep in water, when—her faculties sharpened to almost supernatural acuteness—she heard the faint clatter of a horse's hoofs coming up the lake-side road. Without waiting a moment she ran backward through the little wood growing between the lake and the highway, and reached the road just as a young man, well mounted, was rounding the corner.

"I am so glad that you have come!" she cried, holding out her hands.

She was breathless, and for the moment could say no more.

"What is it?" said the stranger, reining up and looking at her in amazement, as if she had been a spirit, or more probably a maniac.

"He is drowning!" cried Lizzie, pointing backward to the lake; "save him."

He asked no more, but turned his horse's head and dashed down the woody path to the lake side; jumped off; flung his bridle across a branch; gave one look to Grace cowering therein helpless terror watching poor Ralph in his desperate strait; another to the lake and the drowning man; then pulling off his coat, throwing down his cap, and

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laying his watch on the top quite calmly and collectedly, he plunged into the water and swam up to Ralph, caught him by the collar as a dog might have done, beating down his clutching arms, and brought him safely back to land—laying him as if he had been a child on the sweet-gale at Lizzie's feet. And when he had done this, he tossed up his hair, and coolly went in again for the boat and oar; and brought them too to shore. All done in the off-hand, dashing, and yet collected manner of an Englishman possessed of all his powers and understanding exactly how to use them.

Then he came out of the water and shook himself; examined Ralph lying exhausted and fainting on the sweet-gale; loosened his tight clerical stock; wiped his clammy face; and made him drink some whisky which he had in a flask in his coat-pocket, asking Lizzie to give it to him—"the left-hand breast-pocket," he said, as if he had been her brother, and she accustomed to his personals from childhood. Then he told Ralph not to give way, lie would be all right in a moment; and as he said this he looked round to the girls cheerily, and told them too not to be anxious, it was just a little

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exhaustion that would pass directly, and he (he did not know what to call Ralph, nor how he stood with them) would be none the worse for his compulsory bath in half an hour or so. Said in a rich, round, mellow voice, of itself enough to have called back a dying man from the grave, it was so full of life, so eloquent of the grand divinity of strength.

Standing there in the cloudless sunshine, supporting Ralph as tenderly as a woman and with the strength of a man of another race and climate, Lizzie thought she had never seen any thing so noble—so magnificent. Tall, powerful, bronzed, black-bearded, he dwarfed Ralph Wynter to the dimensions of a boy, and made him look weaker and less masculine than many a girl; not so much by mere superiority of size as by the superiority of power which his whole bearing expressed. Even the dripping garments of the two seemed to impoverish the one, but to make the other finer still with the sense of danger bravely faced and bravely overcome.

The girl stood as if entranced; her eyes fixed upon him, her lips apart and almost breathless,

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her pale cheeks paler than even Ralph's with the sudden gathering of the blood about her heart, as when one has heard' some noble strain of unexpected music, or has seen some picture of heroic grandeur, or of divine unearthly beauty; while he returned her look with one of admiration as open as her own, and a certain gallant consciousness that he was worth admiring for his own part, which might be called vanity or simple self-knowledge, as one chose to be condemnatory or charitable.

While Lizzie Lorton stood in her trance Grace knelt by the young rector, and chafed his hands and patted his face, and petted him as a woman pets a child; all in the sweetest and most innocent manner possible, very charming to a man's feelings, if of but little value towards his recovery. But when Ralph opened his eyes again and understood the disposition of the group of which he was the centre, he felt that he would have given all the tender little girlish caresses of pretty Grace for one look—only one—from , Lizzie's dark abstracted eyes. And their, as his consciousness fully returned, and the whisky and the bright

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May sun together warmed his chilled blood, he staggered up from the sweet-gale and rose to his feet, offering his hand to the stranger.

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"You are my saviour, under God, and I shall never forget this day,"he said in a low moved voice. "Tell me your name, that I may remember it always in my prayers, and that I may know how to thank you and keep you my friend to the end of my life."

"O! it was a very little matter, not worth thanking for," said the stranger, tossing back his hair, evidently one of his pretty gallant tricks. "But if you want to know who I am, I am Ainslie Forbes, the superintendent of the new lead mine on Haverbrack. I lodge at Dowthwaite's, of Dale Head in Wastdale; and if you take my advice you will go there with me now and get your clothes dried."

"Yes, I will: I was on my way there when this accident happened," said Ralph. "But you will come and see me and my mother at the rectory; will you not?—I am Mr. Wynter."

"Certainly; with great pleasure," Ainslie answered. "But now you must be advised by me,

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and be moving, if you please; that is if you feel strong enough for the walk. If you don't, you can have my mare if you like, and I can walk."

"No, I would rather go on foot," Ralph said, smiling faintly, and thinking that he might perhaps come to grief in horse-riding as well as in boat-rowing, which would be rather too heavy a chapter of accidents for one day.

"Very well, as you will: but the ladies?" here Ainslie hesitated, as he hesitated before, not knowing their relations with the rector, and afraid of committing some terrible blunder if he defined any thing; "what will they do? Do they come too? and who does that skiff belong to?"

"I'll come part way with you, just to set you on," said Grace, now that her terror was passed, all her old light-hearted self again. "I am Luke Hogarth's daughter, and I live at the How; which is on the way to Dale Head from here, you know."

"Yes, I know," Ainslie said. The Howand Haverbrack are the only places I do know as yet, beside Dale Head; for I came only a few

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days ago; I have been kept back a month or more beyond my time—"

"Yes, I heard," cried Grace; "we were all quite tired out with looking for you, and wondered when ever you did mean to come."

"Yes, it was very annoying, but it was the, fault of the board—it was no fault of mine," Ainslie said carelessly. Then—what will this lady do?" Here he turned to Lizzie; "Do you come with us?" he asked, and his manner was different somehow from what it was when speaking to Grace, and his eyes were different—and darker: "or do you go with Miss Hogarth?"

Lizzie started when he spoke to her, and turned away her eyes, opening and shutting them two or three times quickly, as if she had just come out of a sleep. Then she crimsoned—neck, cheeks, forehead—as she answered in a low voice.

"That is my skiff; I must row back ;" for the moment wishing there was no such obligation, and that she might have gone on to Dale Head with the rest.

"Alone? Are you safe?" said Ainslie; and he looked concerned. "She is unfit for any lady

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to manage alone, and unsafe for the lake at all, I should say. She is a river-boat, and a ticklish one even there. I do not like your going back alone!"

"No, it is not safe!" urged Ralph, coming near to Lizzie. "Miss Lorton, come with me; let me beg of you to come back with me!"

But she did not hear him. She looked up to Ainslie as he spoke ; and then she dropped her eyes suddenly again, a peculiar smile, so sweet, so faint, so timid, that it changed the whole character of her face, trembling round her lips as she stood with a dreamy air, as if listening still even after he had made an end of speaking.

"I am used to it," she said after a short pause. "It is my own boat, and I like it."

"And you row yourself?"

"Yes," she answered.

"A true Lady of the Lake!" he cried with undisguised admiration.

And again Lizzie blushed, till the coral on her bosom looked pale beside her face.

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"Do come to Dale Head with me, and let one of the Dowthwaites take your boat home! It

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makes me wretched to think of your going alone after such an untoward accident!- said Ralph, laying his hand upon her arm.

He had often done so before, and she had never disliked it; but now she shrank at his touch; it seemed like some antedated infidelity of which she should be repentant and ashamed—and at the same time she lifted her head haughtily.

"One of the Dowthwaites take my boat home! Do you think I would allow a common man to have my skiff?" she said in her proudest voice; so that Grace flushed for vexation at such a tone and manner as applied to Mark Dowthwaite and his family, and Ainslie Forbes too looked uncomfortable; while to Ralph it was as if an evil spirit once exorcised had spoken again through her. She moved away, nearer to the lake.

"Well! we must be going anyhow," then said Ainslie Forbes. "At all events you must, sir," to Ralph, "else I will not, answer for the consequences. I am on horseback—as you will not take the mare—and shall soon warm my blood; but indeed you must be moving."

But still Ralph lingered. A, strange disincli-

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nation to leave possessed him: he had the feeling that he should never see Lizzie Lorton again-as if she would be drowned in that smooth, bright, treacherous lake, and all their pleasant friendship be at an end for ever.

"Miss Hoggarth! persuade Mr. Wynter not to keep standing any longer!" cried Ainslie almost impatiently.

"You had better come along with me, now at once, Mr. Wynter," said Grace obediently, and taking his hand as a big child with a little one. "Mr. Forbes will ride past us and tell Aggy to get the things ready; but do you come now at once, else you will get your death of cold; indeed you will!"

"I will take some dulcamara—some camphor," stammered Ralph, still looking at Lizzie, and forgetting that he had not his case of globules with him.

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"La! such foolishness!" cried Grace. "Better come with me and get your clothes dried, and a cup of tea or a glass of something hot, instead of eating those mites of sugar-plums!"

"Yes, do, Mr. Wynter!—good-bye!—do go!"

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cried Lizzie, offering her hand, but not looking at him—looking at the lake instead.

But the Lizzie Lorton who had rowed down the lake as calmly happy in the society of her friend as an affectionate sister might, have been, and the girl who now gave him her hand, were as unlike as if they had been two different women, with only colour and outline kept the same.

A look as if he was suffering acute pain crossed Ralph's pallid face; but he had no help for it. If he would not make himself ridiculous, he must go, as they said, and leave her—leave her to her solitary journey home, and leave her so unlike herself. But this last pain was not acknowledged to himself: he believed that he was anxious only for her safety.

"Take care of yourself, Miss Lorton!" he said, pressing her hand tenderly, and with a long look of loving care. But Lizzie withdrew her hand abruptly, and did not give him even a smile for his loving gaze. He was not looking his best at this moment. He was deathly pale—his face painted in with blue and white only; his hazel eyes were red and watery; his hair

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hung lank and dripping about his cheeks; and he was trembling with cold and nervousness—altogether he was unhinged, and even the small amount of backbone that he possessed was washed out of him. And the one thing which Lizzie Lorton worshipped was strength.

"Good-bye," was her answer, made almost impatiently. "Do go away, it is so foolish waiting here! Pray go, Mr. Wynter! You have been saved from death once to-day. Don't kill yourself with cold now—shivering in this manner!"

"Yes, go, Mr. Wynter," urged Ainslie Forbes.

"I'll make him, if he won't," laughed Grace, taking his arm between here two clasped hands, and so leading him off into the wood as a captive.

"Let me assist you," said Ainslie, as Lizzie made a movement towards the boat.

"Thank you,'" she answered, lingering and giving him her hand.

But why did she linger? and why should she accept the offer of help-she who prided herself on her haughty independence? and this man too: only the superintendent of the mines, and not a

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"gentleman"!—why should she smile when he offered her that which from any one else would have been a liberty, and accept a false pretence for the pleasure of remaining a moment longer in his company? Vaguely all this passed through her mind; but like a distant voice only, scarcely heard ; and she gave her hand to Ainslie, and let him assist her into the boat, as if she had been a gentle little girl .used all her life to care and manly courtesy.

"You make quite a picture!" said Ainslie, as she seated herself; "and a beautiful one too!—one of the most beautiful I have ever seen!"

His hand was on the gunwale of the boat, ready to push her off; and the sunlight shone full upon him as he stood bending forward, the bright drops still falling from his beard and clothes. His hat was off, and his rich black hair—as black as Lizzie's own—glistened in the sun as it was tossed in curly masses rich and thick; his eyes were dark and bright and tender, but with a laughing look in them as well, that lightened up his face like sunshine; and the red line of the broad lip and the white line of

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the gleaming teeth showed with increased vivid-ness between the shadowing curves of the dark moustache and beard. Lizzie looked at him as she had looked at him before - taking in every feature as one takes in every point of a picture—the open forehead, the steady eyes, and the broad dark brows; the bronzed throat and hands, with the white skin showing almost as if the darkened tan had been painted by a line, when the collar and the wristbands sometimes slipped aside; even the purple shirt, and the little inch of scarlet against the armhole of the waistcoat, the gold watch-chain across the pale gray cloth, and the small bow of the purple tie—she noted every thing, with eyes and brain and heart, and thought that Ainslie Forbes, standing there in the summer sunlight, was the ideal of her day-dreams, the thing she had so long looked for and expected.

"I am not so beautiful as you are; I am not so strong, and I am not heroic," she said impulsively.

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"Thank you!" said Ainslie with a gallant smile; and he held out his hand, which she leaned forward to take. "I would not have regretted

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being half-drowned to have had so pretty a compliment, and from so lovely a lady!"

He pressed her hand warmly; he pressed it twice; and Lizzie did not think him impertinent. And then he pushed off the skiff, and stood watching her for some time, as she pulled herself slowly through the blue water, once waving his hand as if to an old friend, with a smile of mingled amazement, admiration, and gratified vanity on his bronzed and handsome face.

"A grand-looking girl!" he said half aloud as she passed away; "and by no means disinclined to a flirtation, I should say. I. will have some fun with her. I wonder who she is!"

But the only words which Lizzie could disentangle from the confusion of her mind were, "And the sons of God came down to see the daughters of men."

"God protect her!" said Ralph Wynter below his breath, turning round when he had reached a height, to take yet another look at the small blue and white line gliding through the sunlit water.

So she floated dreamily homeward, sometimes

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singing in a low soft under-tone, and sometimes feeling as if tears must come—tears of a strange relief, of a vague and nameless happiness—tears sweeter than any joy she had ever known.

The moon had come out, and the stars, and Ralph Wynter had long since been safe at home before Lizzie had locked the Lily to the Greyrigg pier. What she had been doing, and how the time had passed, she could not tell; but it was full into the soft gray of the early night before she found herself awake and at home. What made the moon so beautiful to-night? What made the stars so living and so bright? Was it the day's past heat that gave such wonderful fragrance to the hyacinth-bells in the copse, and to the primroses on the bank? that drew out all the scents from grass and flowers as she walked slowly up the garden-path, till the air seemed voiceful and alive with perfume? What had touched that plain unordered home of hers, so that it was now so beautiful to her? and that the thought of leaving it, as she had so often prayed to do, was like the

thought of death ? How lovely it all looked! How delicious a thing was life! How grateful

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she was that she was young and yes, she knew it without vanity, knew it as she knew simply that she was young beautiful, and fit to love and to be loved!

Dreaming her delicious dreams—walking in a misty heaven which no one now could close against her—feeling as if in the midst of poetry and music and noble statues and glorious pictures—Lizzie entered the house as a queen might have entered her palace. The chord had been struck and the master-note had sounded; for good or for ill the revelation had been made, and the lips so long athirst had stooped to the fountain wherein lay the secret of life. Who could say whether those waters were to be the waters of healing or of death? whether that vague uncertain music would burst into a song of triumph filling the whole temple with its heroic hymn, or would die mournfully away in the sobbing dirges of despair? Who indeed! for when was it ever known if love was to be a blessing or a bale—the joy that opens heaven or the anguish that leads down to hell?

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CHAPTER VII.

UNTO DEATH.

LIZZIE LORTON up and dressed at five! she whom it was a daily struggle to get down to the nine-o'clock breakfast, and who had to be "called" half a dozen times before she would begin to stir! What was the meaning of it? She did not know: she only knew that she had scarcely slept through the night, but had lain longing for the time when she might get up and go out into the open air—on the lake, up the fells, into the highroad—any where, so that she was away from the stifling walls of home. She only knew that she felt suffocated and imprisoned here, and as if every hour of night was costing her some vague chance of a nameless and undefined joy, dearer to her than her life.

Now she was dressed and ready for the day's events; for surely something must happen to-day!

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surely some happiness was coming to her! She could not feel as she did, for it all to run into the mere sand of her ordinary life—for her mother and the children and the dull

monotony of home to be the limits of her being as heretofore. No; something was preparing for her, something beautiful and heavenlike; and she felt as if she was going now upon the way to meet it.

Quietly she went downstairs, unlocked the hall-door, and stood under the porch, watching the morning sun lying on the tranquil lake, and flooding the long line of the western fells, while those to the east were still veiled and tender as the light stole down them shyly. It was not often that Lizzie Lorton had seen the early morning, and the wonderful beauty before her overpowered her. She seemed to be living in another world to the dull barrenness which until now had been her dwelling-place. It was the East; it was Moore's Cashmere; it was the Sweet Waters where lovely Georgian women go to dream of love and perhaps to meet the beloved ; it was Eden; it was heaven—and the angel who was to bear her company was hidden somewhere in the morning sunshine, watch-

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ing her and waiting for her. The marvellous freshness of it all! the young morning and the young spring-time-how fall of present love, and promise for what the day would bring! She stood there in a kind of ecstasy for many moments, till called back to herself by the falling of big tears on her ungloved hands.

"I wonder why I am crying," she said to herself, her tears still falling though her lips were smiling; "why! people would think I was unhappy if they saw me, and I am so happy—so happy to-day! I wish I always felt like this!" said Lizzie Lorton aloud, as she went through the garden and the dewy meadows to the lake-side and that precious little boat of hers, that she loved now—O, how she loved it!

There it lay, moored as she had left it last night, and still strewed with the sweet-gale and withered wild flowers, flung in as Ralph Wynter had stepped across the thwarts to what might have been his death but for that glorious stranger. Among the flowers was a white narcissus which must have fallen from Ainslie's button-hole—as he stooped to push her off perhaps. She had not

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noticed it about him, and she had noticed every thing. Besides, the Dowthwaites had them in their garden; and there were none at the rectory, nor at Greyrigg. She took it up and put it within her dress, blushing as she did so, and feeling ashamed. Yet why should she feel ashamed? why might she not wear a narcissus like any other flower? It was her favourite flower, and she was glad to have found one in the boat—that was all. Yet she

felt it as a secret hidden there, all the same; and in spite of her reasoning was none the less ashamed.

How beautiful the lake looked this morning! how sweet and fresh the air! and how still every thing was! No one yet stirring visibly in the village; no smoke-wreaths rising from the chimneys; no boy's whistle; nothing but the faint barking of some distant faun-dog, the bleating of the sheep upon the fells, the happy song of the birds in the bushes, and the lowing of the kine in the meadows waiting for .their milking. She seemed alone in the world; alone with her dreams and all this delightful beauty. If she could always feel like this!—if she might always

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be alone with her dreams and the day's unclouded beauty!

To get still farther away from the chance of any intrusive life breaking in upon her lonely joy she unlocked the boat, threw in the chain, and shot like an arrow into the lake; almost with the feeling that she was on an illimitable sea, and about to be carried to some island of the blessed to live in unspeakable glory for ever.

Repeating to herself such scraps of poetry as she could remember; thinking over scenes and characters in her favourite novels, and always giving one face only to the heroes and one heart to the heroines; sometimes breaking out into soft singing, as she had done last night, feeling that music and poetry alone could give any thing like expression to the vague ecstasy possessing her, she rowed gently down towards the foot of the lake, knowing nothing and feeling all.

The white mists were rising on the fells, and hanging about the rifts and passes of old Stye-barrow, with that wonderful suggestion of love and human life which the tender morning mists convey. Green Coom, to which she every now and

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then turned her head, with a joy in its beauty as new to her as all the rest, rose large and dim against the eastern sky. Not a marking was to be seen where yesterday evening the very tufts of gorse could be distinguished from the granite boulders round which they grew, and where the miners' huts, and the great water-wheel higher up, the sheep on the crags, the white faces of the bared rocks, each separate cascade of Hartlop beck, and each stunted bush growing by the rift the river made, were to be as clearly made out as if it had been a painted picture close at hand. This morning all had gone. A mass of purple and tender gray, with an undertone of crimson running through, it was like an enchanted mountain in an enchanted land, in the heart of which dwelt a mystery of love

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and loveliness; something that Lizzie yearned to reach, as if there lay the key of all. The whole thing was enchantment to her. Spirits and gnomes and fairies might have peopled this Langthwaite valley, and be now living in the midst of the mountains, for all of reality or likeness to her everyday world that it had; and she said half aloud, "I will get up every day at five

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and row down the lake to see the mists on Green Coom."

Getting up at five o'clock in the morning to see the mists on Green Coom and to watch the painting of the sunlight was all very well, poor Lizzie! but it is doubtful whether that would always lead into the enchanted land, and always people Langthwaite with angels and fairies in the place of its grosser human life.

Before she well knew that she was down, she had neared the landing-place at the foot used by the Wastdale people—where they had landed yesterday. Hesitating a moment, and with the same feeling of shame that she had had before—blushing violently, as if she was watched and understood—she pulled the boat on shore, and stepped out on to the shingle. She looked curiously at all the traces left of yesterday's scene. She saw where Ainslie's horse had trampled up the stones, and where the sweet-gale was still crushed and broken where Ralph Wynter had lain, and Ainslie Forbes had knelt beside him, looking like one of those beautiful statues the Greeks used to worship-like a hero of another

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race; she saw where Grace had torn her cloak upon the thorns, and where a small fragment of the blue woollen still hung on the branches among the white May-flowers: here her boat had been drawn up; here Ainslie Forbes had stood, bending with that wonderful. grace of the strong man, as he lingered, smiling, talking, looking at her so frankly, and as if he liked to look at her, before he launched her on the still lake. She went over every incident again, every movement, every word; and then she sat down on a stone, and looked into the lake, dreaming.

Looking again at the crushed sweet-gale, some thing shining caught her eye. It was a signetring; a sardonyx, with a hand holding a dart cut through the white band into the red beneath, and a motto, "Unto death," below.

"It must be his ring! It is not Mr. Wynter's," said Lizzie quite aloud, as if to some one near her; and she took it up and passed her fingers over it caressingly.

The blood-red hand holding the dart, and "Unto death" beneath, were like things one reads of in a novel, she thought; and seemed as

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if they meant something special to herself. What did they mean? Had she found one who was to be her friend unto death?—or what did the words portend? She was in that highly-wrought state when every thing seems to bear a special meaning to oneself; as if she was standing on the threshold of some great event, waiting, waiting—fearing and yet hoping, and reading every chance occurrence as an omen of the future coming on.

Near to where she found Ainslie's ring was a small paper note-book. She took that up also, and saw Ralph's handwriting inside. But though she put the ring on her watch-chain, and concealed it, like the flower, inside her dress, she laid the little note-book on the stones again. She could not have let Ralph Wynter know she had been down to the place of his misfortune at five o'clock the next morning; and besides, she did not care to secure his property.

Lizzie stood there on the shore, lingering about; now wandering through the little wood and on to the high road for a few yards; now sitting on the rocks watching the young morning strengthen into the day; but lingering in an in-

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definite kind of hope—of what? She knew not of what. And then, when the sun was beginning to lie heavy on the earth, she entered her boat again, and rowed back a. little wearily; coming up the garden-walk just as they were sitting down to breakfast—Mrs. Lorton in a placid state of wonder as to "where Lizzie could possibly be!"

She did not vouchsafe many explanations. She simply told them she had got up early, and had been on the lake; to which Mrs. Lorton observed, "My goodness, Lizzie, what next I wonder! Out till dark, and up at sunrise—why, child, the skies will fall!" And her father, looking over his spectacles, added in his mild voice: "What! Lag-last up before the rest of the house! what rostrum stung you to that, my lazy Io?"

And as these were the only comments made, she did not enter into longer details; but she told them instead all about Ralph's misadventure yesterday, making much of Ainslie's heroism, if but little of himself personally. She could not have told them that he was handsome or like a Greek statue! Even when Mrs. Lorton asked what he was like, she guarded her speech in a manner strange indeed

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for her, and merely answered : "O! I don't know. He is tall and dark I think; but I really scarcely know."

"And a gentleman?" asked Mrs. Lorton.

"I suppose so," Lizzie answered, crimsoning.

"The superintendent of a small mine like that on Haverbrack can scarcely be a gentleman," put in Captain Lorton quietly. "I dare say he is one of these new men—decently educated, and enterprizing, and all that, but not a gentleman."

"He is well-bred," said Lizzie, feigning to eat 'her toast with an unconcerned air, and speaking with apparent indifference, but in a voice more than usually harsh and deep.

"So he may be—surface manner is easily acquired; but for all that I don't suppose he is a gentleman," persisted Captain Lorton.

And Lizzie did not reply.

"We shall know him, I suppose," said Mrs. Lorton.

"He is going to the rectory," Lizzie answered.

"O, then we shall! We have so little society here that he will be an acquisition if he only knows how to behave himself," said Mrs. Lorton.

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"I don't think there is much doubt of that," said Lizzie coldly. And the conversation dropped.

Still she could not rest. It was the children's holiday time at this present moment, so that her hours were her own; for she stoutly refused to help them in their play. She recognized her duties—if sullenly, yet she recognized; but works of supererogation to the young Lortons were beyond Lizzie's code of morals. Leaving them to themselves then, perfectly indifferent as to whether she should be scolded at dinner-time or not, she went out into the garden ; now wandering about the bit of tanglement called by courtesy a shrubbery; now making pretence to pick off dead leaves and pick up living weeds; now sitting in the garden-chair with a book in her hand as if reading—but always keeping within; sight of the gate or the high road, fingering the narcissus or the signet-ring lying within the violet folds of her muslin dress.

As the hours passed, she became even more restless, and the exquisite delight of the morning was fading gradually away. She began to get saddened and depressed; and when the two-

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o'clock dinner came, every one remarked how pale she was, and how black about her eyes, and dispirited altogether. Neither could she eat, and she looked as if a harsh word or a kind one would have equally thrown her into tears.

"Getting up at five in the morning doesn't suit you, Lizzie dear," said Mrs. Lorton kindly. "I am sure the mutton was delicious, and yet you sent your plate away almost untouched, and you are as white as a sheet. You must have some medicine to-night if you don't look better, dear."

"I am quite well, and getting up at five has nothing to do with it," Lizzie answered petulantly.

She was always annoyed when Mrs. Lorton noticed her appearance or her appetite, or threatened her with medicine -which, however, she never took. Any thing that suggested interference was a tremendous offence to Lizzie, and always had been. Mrs. Lorton was a messing, cosseting kind of woman, fond of fancying that people were ill, that she might have the pleasure of doctoring them, and keeping them in bed on slops and horrible compounds of herbs and honey and

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the like. And when they got up again, she used to smile in her sweet contented way, and call the triumph of nature over her unpleasant assaults the effects of her good management; for if they had not had that draught, or that pill, or that abominable posset, they would have been very ill, they would have just seen! But Lizzie was inexorable and unmanageable on this as on most other points; and had never once passed under her stepmother's hands to be doctored out of an indisposition into an illness.

The day was dragging out to an interminable length. It was four o'clock now; and it seemed to Lizzie as if it ought to be night and bedtime. It had changed too from its early brightness to a dull monotonous gray, and her mood had changed with it: the old feeling of desolation and despair creeping over her like a blight. The spring seemed to have gone, the flowers to have died; the, clematis round the porch was pale and scentless, and death seemed creeping up through the veins of what had been such a bounding and a glorious life. But when it was just a little past four—still lingering by the gate—she heard the

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ringing of a horse's hoofs coming from the village on the road towards Greyrigg—the sharp ring of a well-trained riding-horse, very different from the heavy clatter of the clumsy "cobs" usual in the neighbourhood.

Her heart beat fast; her pale cheeks flamed; her eyes grew dark and brightened into eagerness. As she stood there, with the laurustinus making a softened background for her—her hat off, her black hair clustering about her face, her lithe figure bending forward, her attitude one of listening expectation—she was indeed "a beautiful creature," as Ainslie Forbes said below his breath as he came up to the gate, handsome, gallant, and smiling.

Then the fading joy renewed itself, and Lizzie had nothing more to ask of life.

"I ought to apologize for intruding on you, Miss Lorton," said Ainslie, dismounting and tying his horse to a branch, while he opened the gate and came in as if he had been used for years to visit the Lortons like his equals; "but I have not come on a purely selfish errand, though partly so. In the first place, how are you? I need

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scarcely ask—you are looking so well! but I was anxious to see for myself that you had got safe home in your little skiff; and indeed I am glad to we you!"

All this time he had been standing with her hand in his, holding it cordially—if not quite to the extent of pressing it, yet holding it longer and more warmly than was warranted by their slight acquaintance.

"Thank you," said Lizzie; "it was very kind of you to think of me at all."

Even as she said the words it struck herself as strange that she should thank a man "not a gentleman" for his courtesy to her-she usually so proud and haughty to all people!

"I am used to the boat," she continued hastily, not liking the echo which her inconsiderate speech left on her ear; "and when I am alone I am never afraid, nor in danger."

"You are generally alone?" he asked, looking into her face, his question implying more than the more words.

She glanced up at him shyly. "Always—almost always," correcting herself.

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"How was it then that you were all together yesterday?land how did the mishap come about?"

He had heard the story from both Grace and Ralph, but he wanted to hear her version of it.

"Mr. Wynter *would* come!" she cried impatiently. "I was going to row Miss Hogarth down the lake, and he would come with us, though I told him the boat was too small for three. He does not understand any thing about a boat, and he upset himself—that was all!"—disdainfully. She would not have used that tone in speaking of Ralph, yesterday morning.

"It was fortunate that I was passing at the time when you came out upon me like an apparition—an apparition many men would have given their right hands to have seen!" said Ainslie, running his fingers through his hair.

"It was indeed!—and how brave you were! how strong!" exclaimed Lizzie in her impulsive way.

"Yes," said Ainslie quietly, "I am strong." His pride in his strength and courage and superior physical force altogether was Ainslie's weak point, and Lizzie's praises were like delicious music to

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him. "I am not to be praised for a little more daring than other men have pluck for," he continued, "for I can do so much more than other men can do. I do not know any one stronger than I am!"

The girl turned towards him an eloquent face; but this time she checked herself before she had committed to words the fervid admiration that found sufficient expression, as it was, in her eyes.

"What eyes you have, Miss Lorton! they are the real 'starry eyes' of poets!" said Ainslie Forbes.

The colour came into her face and she lowered them.

"You must not flatter me," she said in a low voice. "I am not used to it."

"No? I should have thought you had been!" was his answer.

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There was a short space of silence after this, and then Ainslie continued: "And another reason why I took the liberty of calling here to-day was, I have lost my ring, and I wanted to know if you had by chance seen it? My last hope is, that I dropped it somewhere in your boat; if I did not, it

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is at the bottom of the lake. I went down to theplace this morning—"

"O! did you?" interrupted Lizzie in a tone ofdisappointment. " When?"

"About nine o'clock."

"O!" she said again.

"Why do you say 'O!' in that voice?" laughed Ainslie.

"Nothing. I did not mean to use any particular voice," she answered confusedly.

"Were you there too?" he asked; "this morning, or when?"

"This morning," she answered very bashfully.

"By Jove! I wish I had seen you!" he exclaimed. "At what time?"

"Quite early. It was only five when I went out."

"Ah! you had the start of me: I was in bed and asleep like a rational creature at that time," said Ainslie. "Are you in the habit of wandering about the country at five o'clock in the morning, pray?" he asked smiling.

"No, indeed not! I got up this morning only because it was so beautiful, but I do not do it in

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general. I think I shall though," she added, and she blushed as she spoke. "It was so lovely, I think I shall take up the habit!"

"If you do, I will too," said Ainslie, "and perhaps I shall meet you sometimes."

She turned away her head, half-glad, half-troubled. Was this right? she thought. Was she not very "bold"? Would this stranger have dared to say so much if she had been what she ought to have been in conduct? It was very delightful to be with him—

she did not know why it was so delightful—but ought she to show her pleasure so plainly?

And even Ainslie, who had given in to this flirtation with a pretty girl who so evidently admired him, as a day's enjoyment in his new place of residence, even he seemed to think that matters were going too far and fast for prudence—not to speak of propriety; which was scarcely his affair—for he suddenly assumed a certain formality of manner quite different to what he had had before, when he asked, as if this was the pith of the whole matter: "Did you then by chance see my ring, Miss Lorton?"

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"Yes," she said, "I found it, and took it away with me."

"Found it? where?"

"On the shore where Mr. Wynter had been lying."

"And you overlooked his note-book! How odd!" said Ainslie Forbes, watching her.

She did not answer; but rather nervously drew out the watch-chain from her bosom—drawing out the flower she had placed there as well, which Ainslie's quick eye recognized as he stooped to pick it up—and, unfastening the swivel, gave the ring into his hand.

"Ten thousand thanks!" he cried. "This ring is the most precious thing I have, and was given me by the woman I loved the best in life."

The girl blanched.

"Indeed!" she said huskily.

"Yes; that ring was my dear mother's gift to me just before she died, and I wear it almost as a talisman. If I were to lose it, I should expect some great misfortune to happen to m; and if ever I marry, it shall be my 'betrothed ring;' I mean I will give it to my love to wear until she is my wife."

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"You ought to thank me then for restoring it to you," said Lizzie with embarrassment.

"I do," he answered smiling; "but what could you have done with it? It is too large for you."

"Is it?" she said, looking down.

During this conversation they had been standing near the gate, Lizzie dangling her hat in her hand, playing with its soft white feather, while he stood nearer to the gate, with his arm stretched all along the top bar.

"I have been keeping you a most unreasonable time," he then said. "I am really ashamed of myself, and much obliged to you, Miss Lorton, for your kindness to a poor waif and stray like me; but I must not impose too much on you."

He held out his hand. She laid hers within it with a tremulous haste that was almost painful. Was he going? was the night to come so soon?

"Will you not come into the house and see papa and mamma?" she asked hurriedly. "I told them of yesterday, and they were quite touched at your noble action. You must not go without seeing them."

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"Thank you!" he said with a bright smile. "I should like to know your family."

When they came to the porch covered with clematis, Ainslie asked the girl to give him a spray; which she did—the prettiest and freshest there.

"Now we are quits," he said with meaning, glancing at the narcissus in her waistband, where she had placed it when restored.

In the drawing-room they found Mrs. Lorton in the easy-chair dozing peacefully; and Lizzie had to touch her arm twice before she could rouse her.

"She would sleep all day long if she was allowed to do so," she said contemptuously; "she is so fearfully indolent!"

And Ainslie, struck by her voice and manner, thought to himself, "The young lady has a temper, at all events, however beautiful she may be!"

"This is Mr. Forbes, mamma," said Lizzie, when she had at last succeeded in rousing her stepmother;—"the gentleman I was telling you of, who saved Mr. Wynter's life yesterday."

"Ah, indeed!" said Mrs. Lorton, smiling sweetly while she settled her cap which had fallen half off

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her head, and sat now all awry like a soldier's foraging cap. "I am glad to see you, Mr. Forbes," offering her fat white dimpled hand; "we were all quite overcome when Lizzie told us how you had saved our dear young rector's life at the risk of your own; and we all feel that we should be grateful to you."

"Not quite at the risk of my own!" laughed Ainslie. "I am too good a swimmer to be drowned in smooth water!"

"You seem as if you could do every thing!" cried Lizzie abruptly.

He smiled complacently." Most things that other men can do!" he answered with affected carelessness. "I have had a thorough training in all athletic sports and exercises, and I may say not many men can surpass me."

"Ah! that is the kind of life for a man!—the only life worth living!" cried the girl enthusiastically.

But Mrs. Lorton, with a kindly thought to her dear young rector who could not even mount a horse, said a little gravely: "Yes, it is very nice I am sure; but some men are not strong enough

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to be clever at such things, and yet they are very nice too!"

"Yes; Mr. Wynter for instance," said Ainslie. "He is not quite the model for an athlete, and yet what a fine fellow he seems to be!"

"Ah! you may say that!" cried Mrs. Lorton warmly. "He is an angel, and his mother is an angel too!"

"I am just going there now," said Ainslie. "I want to see for myself that he is no worse for his yesterday's trouble; and I suppose that I shall see Mrs. Wynter too."

"Give her my love," said Mrs. Lorton.

"And yours?" he asked, turning to Lizzie.

"If you please," she answered, not so warmly as her mother had spoken.

"And to Mr. Wynter?"

This was said to both ladies together.

"Certainly," cried Mrs. Lorton. "Mr. Wynter is a great darling with us all. He and,Lizzie there are the greatest friends, of course; that is only natural; but we all love him."

"So does he you," said Ainslie, laughing a little maliciously. "He was quite eloquent yester-

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day at Dale Head on the virtues of the family, and especially on the virtues and charms of Miss Lorton."

"He is very kind, but he need not have given himself the trouble of speaking of me at all!" said Lizzie haughtily.

She was desperately annoyed at the impression that Ainslie seemed to have of the intimacy and regard between her and poor Ralph, only yesterday her "brother;" and especially annoyed against her mother for her foolish speech. But she dared not say any thing more at the moment. She only promised herself that "if Mr. Forbes had taken any absurd idea about Mr. Wynter, she would most thoroughly undeceive him before many days were past!"

Some more talk followed; and through it all Ainslie was constantly turning up as the hero, and praised and flattered by both mother and daughter as if he had really performed an act of dangerous daring in swimming a few yards into a perfectly still lake, to rescue a man not half his size nor weight.

All of which fed that dangerous weakness of his, his vanity, till he almost himself believed that

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he had really done magnificently, and deserved well of Langthwaite, as Mrs. Lorton and that lovely flatterer so often said. For after all, risk or no risk, a life was something to have saved, he thought; it was a god-like thing to do let who would be the doer; and it was not often that a man had the opportunity of doing any thing so important. So that, if not exactly heroic by the amount of danger he had run personally, he was heroic by the largeness and importance of what he had done, and the praises showered on him so liberally were only his due. It was a large thing—an heroic thing—a noble thing—and

he deserved well of his fellow-men, and was not over-praised at Greyrigg; and though of course women always exaggerate and talk bosh, still in the main they were right—he, Ainslie Forbes, was a gallant fellow, as gallant as he was handsome; and he knew he was *that*, not being blind, he said, when he looked in the glass, or caught the reflection of his figure in the sunlight.

But if the Lortons' praises exalted him in his own esteem and made him twice as vain as he was before, what then was his self-satisfaction at the

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rectory, when Mrs. Wynter wept over him, and called him her other son, and thanked God for the blessing of his brave; young lif? when Ralph, expansive and moved beyond his natural self, said he would hold him as his brother for life, and that nothing would ever be too much to show his gratitude for the wonderful act of heroism performed? when he found himself received at once into the very intimacy of their lives—and that, not as a pleasant stranger who must win by long probation the esteem which no previous knowledge warranted, but as a son of the house—as a benefactor to these so much his social superiors? Ainslie was a fine-hearted fellow in many things, but the fault we know of obscured at this moment all his better qualities; and even a mother's gratitude could not blind Mrs. Wynter's quiet eyes, nor make Ralph feel that his saviour was exactly the man he would have chosen for his bosom friend had he had a choice in the matter. And yet they were both conscious of the real worth underneath this "top crust" of conceit, as Jobby called it; and as both were of the rather rare class of Christians who voluntarily "think no evil," they accepted

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the good and did their best to ignore the evil, when appraising their new friend mentally.

Too sudden a draught may intoxicate the coolest head, and this had been a sudden draught to Ainslie. From having been a stranger of not too elevated social position, he found himself all'at once on the pinnacle of social success. Admitted as an equal to Greyrigg and the rectory—the only aristocratic houses in the place; made much of and renowned—why the very village boys pointed to him as he rode through Langthwaite, and called to ones another: "Here's t' chap as pu'ed our priest free t' watter!"—Lizzie Lorton, so beautiful, and a "gentleman's" daughter, evidently taken with him and ready to east herself at his feet—his lines had indeed fallen in pleasant places by reason of—his miserable little Haverbrack mine; and as he rode homewards that day, he more than once said to himself: "Perhaps the turning-point of my life has come, and the ill luck of the family is going to change!"

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE VESTRY.

IT was time for the ill luck of the Forbes family to change. It had pursued them with a steadiness which the superstitious might have almost said was fate; and it never seemed tired of pursuing them. Bit by bit every thing had gone wrong with them; their surest prospects had been destroyed by some quite unforeseen accident; speculations, which had answered well in the hands of others, failed so soon as they invested; if they placed their money in a bank, the bank was sure to break and pay no dividend; if they bought a flourishing business in a prosperous town, a railway was certain to swamp their market, or to take away their custom; whatever they touched crumbled to pieces, reason or none; and struggle as they might, they could never

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break the web of misfortune in which they were entangled.

Then there had been untimely deaths among them. One by one the heads and mainstays of the family had died at the very moment when things seemed to be mending; but the mending depending only on that one life; thus sinking the survivors still lower in the social scale—till now Ainslie was left alone in the world to make his own way as he best could, unassisted by family influence, and unsupported by family love.

He was absolutely alone and absolutely penniless, save what income he could earn by his own exertions. His father, who had been a gentleman's steward—and glad to be even that, as so much between him and the workhouse—had been dead these ten years; and his mother had died about four years ago, and with her her income—a life-interest in a small property left her by her father: and he had neither brother nor sister, and no cousins that he knew of. To be sure he had heard rumours of a far-away connection of his, a Miss Elcombe who lived in London; but she was only one of his grandfather's sister's race, so that he

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did not stand very near to her, and he really knew nothing of her—not even her age nor her condition. Beyond this rather shadowy connection, then, he knew of no one in whose veins ran the same blood as his own. He did not fret for that. Sufficient to

himself, he wanted no one as a moral support, how glad soever he would have been of influential patronage.

Quick, intelligent, ambitious, and self-confident, he was just the man to rise; and just the man, heaven help him! to be damaged by any success that was not won with earnest struggle, and after the wholesome preparation of disappointment. He was a man who, for his soul's health, needed to be scourged by misfortune and disciplined by humiliation; else the evil taint that was in him would increase and spread until it had leavened all the rest. Any thing like sudden elevation would simply be his ruin. Even now the foolish little glory which he had gained in a small country society showed where the weak spot was; and the vanity which had always been his worst enemy was more than ever rampant, bringing with it a certain insolence and swagger that sat

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not ungracefully upon the handsome fellow, simply because he was so handsome and so bright, but that any true friend would have been sorry to see, and that his truest friend would have striven to put down.

Fresh from the applause and friendliness of Greyrigg and the rectory, he was scarcely so frankly cordial with the Dowthwaites when he got home as he had been at the first; a dash of high-handed superiority—what Jobby called "bumptiousness"—colouring his address; in justice it must be said, quite unconsciously to himself. But the old man, sitting smoking his pipe in the ingle nook, and laughing in his sleeve at the daftness of young folk whose heads were no steadier than the "clocks" in the fields, saw the change well enough; and understood all about it when Ainslie told him where he had been, and that he was to dine at the rectory some day soon—the day was not fixed yet—launching out into quite enthusiastic praises of the new rector and his mother, and speaking as if they were his friends especially, and he had the right of an equal to praise them.

"Ay, ay, lad!" said the old man in his slow

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monotonous voice, "like eneugh. Nowt make sic a fine face as a lile lock smoor o' paint on ane's sin. Thou'lt gang wi't new mon han' an' glove noo, I'se warran ye?"

"I am sure that the better I know Mr. Wynter the more I shall approve of him," said Ainslie grandly

Jobby smiled.

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"Weel, it's a queer day for Langthut when twa foreigners can set things a' at sixes an' sebins i' this gait—t'ane wi' his schemes, and t'ither wi' his warks! But times is queer ivery place. We'se coom to t' tail eend o't auld ways, and I'se vexed for't."

"Mr. Wynter will do the place a world of good, Mr. Dowthwaite," said Ainslie.

"Ye think sae? I think he'll do it a world o' ill," Jobby answered. "Not that I'se owt to say agin hisself. He's a fine young mon eneugh, and I'se be bound means weel; but he div'n't ken Langthut, an' I du."

"But he only wants what is good for every place, Langthwaite or not; and I cannot say but that I think a little rubbing up will be a mon-

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strous improvement to you all. You must move with the times, Mr. Dowthwaite. And all that. our rector wants is to get things ship-shape, and like the rest of the world."

"Mappem; but he winna git what he wants," said lobby with a dry laugh, mindful of his own "kingship." "Lo ye noo—see here—wha's at his back? Thysel', and thou'rt nowt; our Mark here, and he's nobbut a lad wi' nae mair power nor my young galloway in t' intake; and that daft scatterbrain Luke Hoggard yonder; and he's gitten nae mair. But Luke 'll not carry t' parish nor t' vestry neither agin me: and I'se not ane o't new mak. I'll gang ony lenth i' reason, but I'd leifer be hanged oot o't road a' togither nor see t' ould church rived and raved aboot as Mr. Wynter wants; and I for ane 'll niver darken t' doors agin, if a' t' lads an lasses in t' parish are to skrike oot t' psaulms like a set o' play-actors. I like t' young parson gaily weel, but I like t' auld place better; and he has to coom doun a peg or twa afore he and I cottons togither. Ye may tell him what I say, an' ye've a mind. I'se got to tell him mysel' when t' time cooms."

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"Hoot, father! ye'll be reasonable like other folk. Barking dogs never bite, remember!" said Mark good-temperedly.

"Ay, my lad; but it's best to let sleeping dogs lie, ye ken."

"But, father, sakes alive! a new man must have new ways," Mark answered.

"Yis; and young cocks must hae t' combs on 'em cut when they craw ower lood," said Jobby.

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"All right, father; but who is to fix what is ower lood?—the old cocks?" asked his son laughing.

"Wha better, lad?"

"Well, I don't know about that! If the old always cut the combs of the young, we should be in a poor way, I'm thinking."

"Maybe ye wad, my lad," returned his father; "but, poor way or nin, t' new priest shall not craw over Langthut while I'se Bitten a crop o' my ain: thof' I like him gaily weel, as I said afore, and hae nae call agin him. But I'se my duty to do, lad, and I'll do't, were't iver so!"

He showed what he meant by doing his duty

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at the next vestry-meeting, when he set himself in opposition to every scheme proposed by the new rector. The question first taken was that of the church, and what repairs were necessary, and what the parish would give towards its thorough it "restora tion," and if they would consent, quietlyand amicably, to. a reconstruction and reallotment of the pews.

Luke Hogarth spoke in favour of the plan, and dilated not a little on the pride of Langthwaite in having as fine a church as there would be in the country; and Wilkin Yanwath followed suit—both speaking "fine Cumberland," and both a little conceitedly—the one with the swagger of the new-made man, the other with the secret importance of the modernly educated and well-descended one. And then Jobby took up the word, speaking in his slow, quiet, inflexible voice, but with an air of influence and authority that even at the time struck Ralph as a most singular study.

Repairs? the church wanted no repairs—"a life lock o' whitewash nows and thens mappem," he said, "but nowt mair; and that not ower oft."

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As for the "restoration," as it pleased some folk to call riving a thing to bits-as for groined roof, scraped walls, corbels, crockets, finials, lecterns, open pews, and stalls, organ-loft and organ, stained windows, candlesticks, and new furniture—Jobby did not go frantic: that was not his way; but he was more emphatic and stiff-necked than he had ever been seen before. Partly perhaps because this was the first time any stronger will had come into collision with his own; the first time he had felt his throne shaken, and

his sceptre crossed. Until now the priest had been merely his foremost subject; now he was his rival, and threatened to be his deposer. So that he was "like to be stiff," as Wilkin said, speaking of the meeting afterwards.

When Mr. Wynter reminded him that he could get a faculty from the Bishop empowering him to make what alterations he chose independent of the parishioners' consent or aid, he answered—addressing the meeting, not answering the clergy-man—that if Mr. Wynter liked to do it, and could get power from the Bishop as he said, why he must an' he'd a mind; but he should pay for

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it out of his own pocket, so far as he, Jobby, and the parish as bound by the vestry went. Daft folk might give what they would, if collections were made; but the parish, as a parish, should not give a farthing. And much good might it do Mr. Wynter, when he had got the old church to his liking! It would be something like parting with the pudding for the sake of the pudding-bag, said Jobby grimly, if he found, as he would find, that not a man in Langthwaite would go into his fine new place. It would be his church, not theirs; and he had always believed that the byre was for the cows not for the hind, and that the church was for the parish and not for the priest. As for himself, he swore—and he rapped out an oath that would have cost him ten shillings, at the least, for it was to the full as big as two of ordinary size—he would never darken the old church again, if once they turned it inside out, as they were talking of. A rate for repairs? Yes, when the slates were off, they should be put on again; and when the clock was wrong, it should be set right; but a rate for these new farlies—not a brass farthing! said Jobby Dowthwaite of Wast-

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dale, bringing his huge hand down with an emphasis that settled the matter. Very little discussion was needed after this. Jobby's word was held conclusive, and the rector was beaten on the "restoration."

Then they turned to the matter of Davie Alcock and Michael Jordison, and the propriety of giving the two old fellows a retiring pension, and appointing younger men in their stead. And here again Wastdale Jobby was the obstructive. He stood gallantly by his old friends, and would not hear of their dismissal. Why should they be turned off? he asked. Davie was well enough, and had been well enough forthem all these years; they knew what he said, and if they didn't, they ought to look in their books and then they could see for themselves; and what more did they want? It was downright heathenish to disturb the two old men after they had served the parish these many years.

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Why it would break the hearts of them, not to speak of taking the very bread out of their mouths. Both were past a darrack, or day's work; and what! Michael, he had nobody but his sister to see to him, and since the old parson died Peggy

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had lost *her* living, and the grocery business wasn't over gracious; and Davie was even worse off, for Nannie was "nobbut a puir feckless pleenin' body," and he had her to support as well as himself. They would have to come on to the parish if deprived, for that was just the long and short of the "pension" proposed. And why should they be turned out? Davie was held to be a gay grand scholar in his day, and surely plain reading and writing had not changed from what it used to be; and Michael could make a grave with the best of them yet. He hoped he would make his, said Jobby; if he died before the old chap, he would leave word with them as would mind, that Michael and only Michael was to hap him up. No, there was no call to dismiss either of them; they had done their work well when they were in fuller fettle than now, and had served the parish honestly, and it was thankless like to forget it now, and turn against them because they had got a few years more to their backs, and folk wanted change just for the sake of change.

So this point too Jobby carried though more voted against him and for the rector than had

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done before; there being many in the meeting who would have had no objection to take the offices themselves, if so be that Davie and Michael could be "got shot of" quietly.

As to the charities, they too did well enough. If they were not administered quite to a body's mind, no one but Mr. Wynter had aught to say against them: and if the people who had the benefit did not complain, the parson need not. No good was got by pulling things to bits in this gait; and no good was got out of all these new-fashioned fancies. Old things were best—a body knew what he had to trust to then; he knew the best and worst, and might act according. He was an auld-ways man himself, and he thanked God for it, and Langthut was an auld-ways place, and as long as he was alive and had a tongue in his head he would do his best to keep it what his forbears had made it. The Wasd'le Doothuts had always been men who had stood shoulder to shoulder with their friends and had never turned their backs on their foes; and he was past any thing else now. He asked Langthwaite whether it wanted to shame the forbears on it by going after

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strange ways like a flock Of sheep thr ve by a colley? They might if they'd a 'mind, but they wouldn't get a Dowthwaite among them.

And then he spoke of what had been rankling in his mind from the beginning: the administration of the sacrament out of course—once a month gude Lord!—the change from an afternoon to an evening service; the new manner of singing—certain psalms being chanted that were always said before; the "heathenish" service on the eve of Good Friday, and the sacrament then too, in real imitation of the Last Supper—"was iver sic like wickedness heerd tell on?" said Jobby, a little more excitedly than was usual with him; the Sunday-school, as it was called, "tormenting t' puir bairns wid nae eend o' clashes and fashes;" in all of which matters he said he thought it would have been more respectful in Mr. Wynter, who was nobbut a young man and. it stranger, to have ast leave before he took such liberties on himself. Langthut was not used to a stranger ruling o' this gait, and Mr. Wynter would find may be that he wasn't quite strong enough to play at spin top with every thing as he liked.

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To which sentiment the meeting assented with noisy applause; and then old Jobby sat down, having relieved his mind, opposed his sea-wall of negations to the tide-wave of insurrections threatening to swamp his old kingdom, and flourished his sceptre for the last time. Mr. Wynter was beaten on every point, and the dalesman was still "king of Langthwaite," with but two rebels, Lake Hogarth and Wilkin Yanwath. Yet Mark was in love with Grace, and Wilkin "was thinking about" Elcy.

Though outvoted in the vestry, Ralph was not to be pat down without farther struggle. If Langthwaite would not see its own good, it must be compelled by main force. With great self-command he kept his temper through it all; combating their rude attacks with sweetness and patience, meeting their prejudices which were not arguments with his clear statements and higher views; and by the hardest of all the exercises of Christian charity, courtesy to ignorance in power, gaining more in personal esteem than he lost in official influence. Langthwaite did not go with him, because Langthwaite was ignorant and obstinate

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and satisfied with its own dirty miserable self, and did not wish to be enlightened nor improved; but neither Langthwaite nor Jobby refused to see the moral beauty of the man whose schemes for their advancement stank in the nostrils of them all.

The Bishop still remained as the ultimate appeal, and here Ralph had no difficulties to contend with. A faculty would soon settle the matter of the church; his court could dispose of old Davie, if indeed he could not be tempted by a sufficiently liberal pension to vacate his square wooden box in favour of some one who could read; Jordison must be left to the parishioners—a sexton was not quite a Bishop's subject; but he too might surely be bribed into a quiet resignation, which would be better for both pastor and. parishioners, and would save a world of heart-burning. The Charities Commissioners would see to the maladministration complained of; due, patience, the increase of personal influence with the increase of personal knowledge, and the moral effect of education and high principle, always sure if not always swift, would in, the end move the parish, specially on minor points.

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For the rest—for the Sunday-school, reading room, lending library, and church improvements, on all of which subjects Ralph spoke to his diocesan as a son to his father—he must pay for them, his Lordship feared, out of his own pocket and the pockets of his friends if determined to have them now. From what he knew of the parish it was more than doubtful if a pound would be raised there—and if any, it would be such a mere trifle as not to be appreciable. He himself put his name down for a handsome sum for the church; but he advised a little delay in the other things; and perhaps by judicious management and by being careful not to unnecessarily wound their prejudices, while of course keeping to his principles, Ralph might gain a certain amount of public support, which would make the whole thing easier.

"Else I much fear, Mr. Wynter," said the Bishop, "that when you have done all this for the parish, and have made it outwardly the model village you propose, you will be in the position of the man who east his pearls -before swine—you know to what result. The church certainly; and

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the Sunday-school, taught wherever you can muster the children, at present, in a hired room if need be; and let the rest stand over."

Wise counsel, if unpalatable to a man enthusiastic and earnest as was the rector of Langthwaite; but he accepted the decision with unquestioning obedience, and returned home with a mind made up as to his course, and prepared to meet the cost gallantly. He and his mother consulted together as to how much could be honestly spared of their joint fortune, and who they thought they might rely on for assistance, and for how much.

Ralph said he was sure of so much—a small sum certainly—from Luke Hogarth; and A. and B. and C. and D.—naming friends of their own—would give each so and so; but Luke Hogarth was the only Langthwaite man to be depended on, and his contribution would be but a drop in the ocean, and simply valuable in a moral sense. Then he suddenly said—

"There is this Miss Elcombe, who owns the Plosh—she is in London they say, and consequently cannot be so ignorant and prejudiced as the people here; perhaps she will give something."

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"If she is rich surely she will," said Mrs.Wynter.

"I wish I could get her address!" cried Ralph.

"Does no one here know it?"

"I think not. Stay. Wilkin Yanwath may. She is heir-at-law to old Admiral Sinclair, who died at the Plosh about a year ago, and Wilkin furnished the funeral; so he may know by a mere chance where she lives."

"Ask and see."

"I will," said Ralph.

And when he did ask, he found that Wilkin Yanwath had the address of the lady's lawyers, though not of herself; a fact which he made into a deep mystery, as implying something quite beyond the public mind, and which he begged Mr. Wynter not to mention, as he did not wish it to get about. Through them, then, Ralph wrote to his unknown parishioner setting forth the needs of the parish, his own intentions, and—very tenderly touched, as a thorough gentleman would touch on such a matter—his opinion as to the duties owing from a parishioner and a landowner to the parish and her property.

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It was then decided that the rector should go up at once to London, to arrange about plans, estimates, architect, workmen—and selling out: as matters stood the most necessary arrangement of all. He had put his hand to the plough, and it was not a trifle that should make him draw back. He had determined that Langthwaite church should be the most beautiful in the county, not even excepting the "lake-country cathedral;" and lie was equally determined that the parish should be the best administered and the beat

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ordered. He would keep strictly to the rubric, and not offend old prejudices more than he could help; but he intended to have his services ordered in a thoroughgoing Anglican manner—with prayers and responses finely intoned, with every chant brought up to perfection, and with the church seasons well marked. His whole heart was in his work, and he was living for his idea; the sole disturbing influence that ever broke its integrity—the dark eyes and flushing cheeks of Lizzie Lorton of Greyrigg.

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CHAPTER IX.

LIZZIE'S LOVE.

THE rectory dinner-party of which Ainslie had spoken to the Dowthwaites was still to take place. It had been postponed, first on account of Mrs. Wynter, who was rather more suffering than usual, and so was unable to receive her son's guests, and then because of Ralph's absence in town.

In the mean time Ainslie lost neither opportunity nor standing. He often rode over to the village, where the boys still pointed him out as "t' chap wha'd fettled oop our parson;" and he often called at the rectory, where he ever found a welcome and wholesome talk from the invalid—sometimes more wholesome than exhilarating, he used to think, when the sun was very bright and the sentiment of outside life more abounding than usual.

And once he had called at Greyrigg, where

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he was introduced to Captain Lorton, and pronounced after his departure "decidedly not a gentleman!—a handsome, intelligent, and fairly mannered young man, but wanting the hall-mark all the same; a man who could not have lived an hour at our mess-table," said Captain Lorton, who, for all his shyness and studious habits, was one of the proudest' men in a quiet way to be met with any where.

Ainslie had not called there again. He had no reams for doing so, as he constantly met Lizzie in her solitary rambles somewhere on the Wastcote road when he came into Langthwaite; which did as well as going to the house, and was less likely to cause remark. For of course he did not go to see the dry old Captain, who had taken no pains to conceal his high-class, disdain, and who did not intend to patronize him. Why should he? "Not a gentleman," and living five miles away, he had no possible kind of claim on his hospitality, thought Captain Lorton proudly; why should he plague himself

with an uncongenial stranger simply because he had saved Ralph Wynter from drowning?

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Nor did Ainslie go to see fat sleepy Mrs. Lor ton, with her placid smile and laboured breath,who had always an uncomfortable kind of feeling against him as if he was a rival somehow to her dear young rector; nor yet the " imps," who were rude rather thaw spirited, and mischievous rather than brave. He went to look smiling into the great brown eyes that looked up at him with such eloquent admiration—to hear the deep voice praise him with a girlish candour that betrayed more than she herself knew, and in tones the very harshness of which lent greater force and a kind of rugged intensity to her words—he went to hear himself called a hero and one of the noblest of his sex, because he had played off a pretty piece of melodramatic gallantry, stood six feet high—military standard, had a handsome face and a picturesque head, was well-built, tall, and athletic, had laughing eyes and a saucy smile, was dashing, vain, good-tempered, and affectionate. He went to enjoy his youth in these warm June days by flirting with a pretty girl who gave him back rich fruits for a few summer rose-leaves flung thoughtlessly into her lap, and who

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accepted a glittering show as so much sterling gold. And when he met her by the wayside, and turned off with her through the lanes to find some shady nook among the trees or in the flowery fields where no one was likely to pass, while telling her how beautiful she was, and offering himself to her praises, he forgot that he was "not a gentleman" and not her equal, but a mere penniless worker outside her sphere altogether, and unable to be ever nearer to her than he was now—he forgot all but the intoxication of the moment, with the triumph and the excitement, the pleasure and the gratified vanity that it brought.

But with her all was as deep and earnest as with him it was a mere summer pastime-in a word it was the old unequal story of flirtation and love, and the acceptance by the intenser nature of surface for depth.

And yet Ainslie was not wholly to blame, in that he was not so much the seeker as the found. Was it his doing that he so often came upon Lizzie sauntering dreamily by the wayside, as he cantered about the lanes and roads on his bright bay mare? was it his doing that she seemed to

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have an almost instinctive knowledge of his days and hours, and to order her life by his goings? And when he met her, and saw how her pale cheeks flamed and her dark eyes drooped as he came nearer—when she laid her small gloved hand in his and came close up to the side of his bonny bay, caressing the arching neck, and lingering as if her very life was there—what could he do but dismount and remain with her? what could any man do but accept such pleasant chances when they offered? He might be to blame perhaps for accepting them so often; and love-making with no serious object as the issue is by no means a noble amusement; but he was young and she was beautiful—he was facile and she was frank—and, God help us all! the best of us are but poor creatures, and which among us has so much surplusage of virtue that he can afford to condemn others? Given the same temptation, and who would have acted with more reserve and prudence?

"Reserve and prudence" with Lizzie were words without weight, almost without meaning. She felt, therefore she expressed; she loved, and

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she did not conceal. During these late weeks her life was like some divine drama, with heaven itself for the theatre. Each time that she met Ainslie Forbes, and saw his handsome face smiling down on her with the gallant smile of a man who admires and is admired, each time that she heard his rich sweet voice and laid her hand in his strong grasp, the tremendous fascination he had over her whole being deepened, and heart and brain became more hopelessly entangled. As they strolled away together, talking she scarce knew of what—for she felt too much to have any distinct intellectual consciousness—it was literally to her as if she was in heaven. She asked nothing more than what she had; she looked neither backward nor forward; she did not know how it all began, nor how it was to end; she only knew that she loved, and she believed that she was beloved. All life lay in the present, and in the fresh young morning of her new-born joy the smallest assurances contented her. If he pressed her hand though never so faintly, as he gave her a flower, that was as sufficing to her as the fondest caress of a later time would have been; if he told her that

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she was beautiful, it was as if he had said he loved her; when he vaunted himself and detailed anecdotes of former strength and daring, ending with "How I wish you had been there to see me!" it was as if he had asked her to share his future life, in his regret that she had not always made part of his past. Her own heart was so fall of love, that no room was left for doubt; and indeed to have doubted him would have been to have dishonoured him in her own esteem.

She loved him; not as a woman loves who has to be awakened into love, but as one who loves unasked, out of the terrible depth of her own nature and with the tragic strength of untaught passion. She loved him; she knew no more—she asked no more. Had he been a beggar, a criminal, an outcast, spurned by men, abandoned by God, she would have loved him all the same, she would have clung to him and would have shared his curse. By his love he might have purchased her very life; and had he wished her to have followed him, nor sorrow, nor crime, nor degradation could have turned her aside. She would have lived in his shadow; she would have

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lain at his feet; humbly and devotedly as a dumb animal following its master she would have followed him to poverty, to prison, to the scaffold, and to shame; she would have drunk of the bitter cup of humiliation, but, with her hand in his, she would have smiled as she drank, and have drained it to the dregs as if it had been amber wine; in the flower of her beauty and the spring time of her youth she would have died for him as gladly as another girl would have gone to her bridal; and had he but said to her as she stepped down into her cold grave, "Lizzie, you have done well, and I thank you," she would have felt that her life had been nobly crowned and her sacrifice gloriously rewarded. And all this for a man whose vanity was pleased by her frank devotion, and whose admiration was aroused by her rare beauty, but who knew distinctly enough when he came to question himself honestly, that he could not marry her, and did not love her. Perhaps because of this very affluence of her heart's gift to him: which left nothing to be won.

There was a charm too in the secrecy of it all. Not that Lizzie cared to deceive, but that she liked

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to be unfettered; and so would rather have met Ainslie Forbes as she did, unknown to any one, than have had him call at the house, however uninterrupted his visits might have been. And yet the incidents accompanying these solitary rambles of hers were not quite unobserved, if the issue was as yet unsuspected. Not that it was a thing to be remarked or commented on, that she should ramble about the country alone. She had been accustomed to this, like most lake-country girls who have no natural companions; and it was not unusual for the dalesmen to tell how they had met "Miss Lizzie yonder, better nor six mile frae Greyrigg, maundering alone like a lost lamb, puir lass! an' t' Cap'n mud as week tak a care on her, an' bide mair wid his dochter an' less wid his buiks, if he did as he oughten—that mud he." But there was nothing then to find out; now the case was different, and Lizzie had a dread of being seen, whether with Ainslie

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or only waiting for him. She thought every one would know why she was waiting by the wayside so patiently, and even in the dales and on the lonely crags she did not feel always safe. For farmers and shep-

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herds have quick eyes and an uncomfortable habit of turning up in all manner of lonely places among the mountains; and many a maiden who thinks her love a secret between herself and heaven, finds to her cost that she has been watched and spied, and that her story has been carried before night-fall into every cottage of the vale.

Those mountain valleys and desolate fell sides are the most dangerous places for love-making in the world. They look so lonely, so secure—not a human being in sight—not a house—not a shieling: but the shepherd is tending his flock among the higher crags; the farmer is cutting bracken for litter; and their keen eyes spy out the pair walling in such careless confidence together, believing themselves as absolutely unwatched and alone as if they were shut up in a tower of brass. Sooner or later the secret is discovered and the lovers are "caught:" but no warnings by the fate of others ever deter; and Chloe always believes that the evil fortune which tripped up Phyllis will never overtake herself

One day Ainslie and Lizzie were walking up Deepdale—a desolate little glen belonging to no

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one, and leading no where—a mere spoon-shaped scoop hollowed out of the east flank of Styebarrow. It was one of those sunless summer days which seem made for the use and the concealment of lovers—one of those purple, days, shadowed, warm, intense, and soft, when the atmosphere is veiled and heavy so that nothing stands out sharply, and when even the brightness of individual colour is lost in the general richness of the whole tone—one of those languid lazy dreaming days in which the young heart drifts as helplessly as a flower-bud floating down the river.

Ainslie was telling the girl a story of his earlier youth, how when a, schoolboy he had fought the three biggest boys in the school single-handed, and had "licked" them all. With a few graphic touches he particularized each: "Fighting Smith," the big, broad-shouldered Saxon; "Clipping Towner," the lithe, wiry, half-caste; "Jupiter Anstruther," the king of the, school, the hero and demigod, the revered by the little fellows and the aped by the big ones—"Yes, I licked them all," said Ainslie, flinging back his hair, "and it was the hardest day's work I ever had."

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"I could not fancy you beaten by any number," said Lizzie looking up into his face.

"Well! it would take a good many," answered Ainslie complacently.

"Have you ever met any one stronger than yourself?" asked the girl.

"Never," answered Ainslie with emphasis.

"I should think not!" she exclaimed. "I should think you were one of the strongest men in England."

"About," he said laughing. "I am undoubtedly beyond the average. As you are beyond the average in beauty," he added gallantly.

"Do you think so?" asked Lizzie with a swift glance upward.

"I am not blind," was Ainslie's reply; "and I have never seen a prettier girl—no, pretty is not the word—a more beautiful girl is better."

"I am glad you think me beautiful," said Lizzie in a low voice.

He looked down at her walking with bent head by his side—a lordly pleasant look, admiring and patronizing; and Lizzie felt his eyes upon her, and cowered under them.

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Then there was silence for a few moments. If Ainslie was facile, he was not dishonourable. He did not wish poor Lizzie to love him too much, and so to end by being miserable and broken-hearted. He only wanted this gay-coloured summer pastime to continue in all playfulness and sunny happiness; he did not want to drift into an engagement on the one hand, nor into a rupture on the other. Her love flattered and warmed him, her association refined and softened him, her praises raised him in his own esteem, her companionship was of infinite service as the companionship of a gentlewoman must ever be to a man self-made and wanting the "hall-mark"—but this, was all he coveted or desired; and more than this would break the spell, and work mischief not delight. Yet he was always drifting into dangerous eddies, and always steering clear of them again—a perpetual alternation of good resolutions and weak compliance, not flattering to his moral strength, had he cared to take himself to task.

Presently they came to a rose-bush full of the deep red thornless roses not so very uncommon

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in the lake-country, and near it an old pollard covered with honeysuckle.

"Now I will make you more beautiful!" he said, gathering a handful of sprays and blossoms. "Take off your hat, Miss Lorton, and let me put these in your hair."

"My hair is short—they will not stay," said Lizzie shyly.

But she took off her hat nevertheless, and stood with uncovered curly head before him.

"I am afraid they will not stay indeed!" he said, lightly passing his hand over the clustering rings. "I am sorry for that; I could have made you such a nineteenth-century Flora."

"Shall I let it grow?" she asked bashfully. "I will, if it would please you, Mr. Forbes."

"You please me too much as you are," said, Ainslie in a low voice.

"Why too much? What harm is there in pleasing?" was her impulsive return.

"There is no harm, but often there is no wisdom in it," he replied. "There is no wisdom in crying for the moon, Miss Lorton!"

"I don't believe in impossibilities," said Lizzie.

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"Not in moons?"

"Some are not impossible," she answered dreamily.

And then she crimsoned and turned away her head shyly. Both had meant the same thing, and Lizzie felt that she had said too much. And yet, if any foolish idea of her superiority possessed him, was she not in the right to try and overcome it, no matter how directly?

"You look so lovely when you are shame-faced!" cried Ainslie, taking her hand in his; "do you know what I should like to do when you look as you do now?"

Lizzie stammered something, she did not know what; and it did not much matter whether it was any thing intelligible or not.

"No, I will not tell you!" then said Ainslie, releasing her hands with an effort. "It is not fair," to himself. Then in a voice unnatural, because of its extreme quietness he added indifferently, "What I was going to say was, I should like to have your picture taken when you look shy and shamefaced, and call it 'Repentance,'—'a naughty girl repentant. ' "

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"But I am not naughty, and when I am, I am never repentant," said Lizzie after a pause. "I hate half-heartedness."

"So do I," said Ainslie; "but the least one can do is to be sorry for doing wrong."

"Then I would not do the wrong if I had to be sorry for it!" said Lizzie warmly. "I would be strong enough either to avoid doing wrong, or else I would not repent when I had done it!"

And there was something in her voice and manner which made Ainslie feel both weak and cowardly.

Soon after this they turned back and went down the glen towards home, young Jobby of Dale Head having watched them all the while this fleeting love-passage had lasted. But young Jobby was a decent man and a silent; and no one at home or abroad was the wiser for what he had seen. He never "let wit" till long after, and then only to Mark, when things had gone too far to make or to mar.

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CHAPTER X.

THE RECTORY DINNER.

DURING this time of Ainslie's ascendency, RalphWynter and all with whom he was connected passed away from Lizzie's life. She gave up her visits to the sick, and for the last few Sundays had not been seen in her place among the shock-headed urchins forming the nucleus of the future Sunday-school. She was always out too when he called; he never met her in his walks; she scarcely knew when he went away, and was by no means rejoiced when he came back; and she had not called once at the rectory during the whole time of Mrs. Wynter's illness.

And this sudden cessation of the intercourse which had been so frank and constant was like the sudden extinction of some great light to Ralph—as if a meteor had flashed upon his sight for one

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brief instant, and now had gone-leaving the dark night darker than before.

Had his mind been less occupied with his parish work, or had his inner life been less lofty than it was, this loss of the sweetness which had been so dear to him would have both opened his eyes to the truth of his own feelings and have disturbed the whole current of his life. But with Ralph Wynter even Lizzie Lorton was subordinate to the church.

Poor Mrs. Lorton with tears deplored the change that had come over her stepdaughter; and after she had begun to be so nice and good-tempered too! "Not that she was exactly ill-tempered," she said; "she could not call her that; but so strange and uncertain; sometimes all brightness and gaiety, actually playing with the children, and as nice as could be; and sometimes so moody and depressed there was no doing any thing with her. There she sat indifferent to every thing, scarcely hearing when she was spoken to; not caring for any one, or whether they were all dead or alive," said Mrs. Lorton; "her eyes fixed on the carpet, not speaking, not eating; in

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fact, doing nothing but dreaming, and sometimes sighing."

"What can be the matter with her? what is the meaning of it all?" asked Mrs. Lorton. Then giving utterance to a suspicion that had often be-fore haunted her, she said, "Is she sane, do you think, Mr. Wynter?—is she quite herself"

"I should think the question a sin if seriously put," answered Ralph gravely.

And Mrs. Lorton smiling placidly said, "Yes, of course; so should I; I only said it in joke. Poor Liz!" she then sighed; "I wish she was well married! I wish she had some one that she cared for and who could control her. I dare say she would make a very nice wife. Unpleasant girls at home often make nice wives when they get a little older. I am sure I hope it will be so with Liz, poor dear!"

Mrs. Lorton did not make this speech quite so innocently as she wished it to appear; for of all things possible in the Lorton ordering of life, that Ralph should " take

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a fancy" to Lizzie was that which she desired with the greatest fervour. Not only for the relief it would be to

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get rid of her, but also for Lizzie's own goo ; for being a kindly-natured woman without spite or rancour, she wished only well to the girl whose tempers made her life sometimes miserable. She did not reflect that perhaps they would make as miserable the lives of both Ralph and his mother, were that "fancy" to be a reality.

Ralph's face a little betrayed him as she spoke, but, making a strong effort to master an emotion of which he was ashamed, and which he did not understand, he answered calmly, "I have no doubt that some one will, Mrs. Lorton, and that her choice will be a wise one, and her life ordered for the best in all things."

"I am sure I hope so," she said. "If there was any thing of the kind, I hope you and your mother would know of it. I don't know any one who has so much influence over her as you have, Mr. Wynter"—with what she meant to be a waggish smile and an arch look, poor dear!

"Have I?" he replied with a brightened look; "I am glad of that!"

"We all noticed how much better she got

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after you first came," continued the lady; "she seemed to be so much happier and gentler."

"I think my mother was of some comfort to her," said Ralph. "She is so beautiful in her own nature that she cannot fail to influence for good all who come near her."

"Ah! she is a sweet creature!" said Mrs. Lorton, "and you are her true son, Mr. Wynter."

"Thank you," he laughed. "But don't you know that I hate praise, my friend? The old monks scourged each other's backs; they did not flatter, or even compliment. As a friend of mine said the other day, graphically if something too strongly, 'The devils stick peacocks' feathers on to each other; but the angels have rods and whips.' "

"You are not vexed with me?" Mrs. Lorton said breathingly.

"Vexed? what should make you think such a thing? Is guarding oneself against a spiritual snare innocently offered being vexed? I am never angry. I cannot say that

though! I was terribly annoyed with old Dowthwaite the other day, and all but lost my temper. He is too

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obstinate for, any rational human being! He is a bit of wood or stone, and no impression can be made on him short of Sydney Smith's surgical operation to let in the meaning of a joke."

"He is notoriously obstinate and prejudiced, I know; but Mark is more rational," said Mrs. Lorton. "Can you not influence him by Mark?"

"I cannot influence him by any thing, Mrs. Lorton. He is utterly unmanageable; else indeed Mark, who is so far his superior in enlightenment, and who is such a good fellow, and his favourite son into the bargain, would have some weight with him. But no one has."

"Shall Lizzie try, Mr. Wynter? Liz used to be a favourite of his once, I believe: shall she speak to him and try to persuade him?"

"Well, thank you, no. You see parish work of this kind is not exactly woman's work," the clergyman replied with a slight smile; "and I should scarcely like to employ in church matters the influence of any woman whatever—even one, so likely to persuade as your daughter."

"It might brighten her up if she had something to do," sighed Mrs. Lorton.

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Ralph thought of the deserted sick, but said nothing. His pastoral rebukes on that head had to be administered to his recusant alone.

"What can I do for her?" then continued Mrs. Lorton in a despairing tone-despairing partly because all her little weapons had failed, and her shafts had fallen blunted from the rector's armour. "She will not let me doctor her, and I am sure she wants something done to her. Shall I send for Mr. Bird? If you think so, I will—to-day. You see I have no one to advise me—the Captain's head is in his books, and he neither knows nor cares what goes on in the house; and poor Liz, she is so obstinate there is no doing any thing with her I But she will obey you, though she won't me. Shall I tell her that you wish her to see the doctor?"

"Why you see I cannot advise in the matter at all," said Ralph: "I have not seen Miss Lorton for many days"—with a little sigh—"so that I cannot give an opinion about

her one way or the other; and then you know I am not an allopath, and could not conscientiously recommend Mr. Bird, even if she were ill—which I hope she is not."

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"Well! what ever I am to do I don't know!" said Mrs. Lorton with a patient manner of despair; "and what ever it is from I don't know; but all her queer ways have come back again, and I assure you she is very trying-very trying she is! I heartily wish that some one would take a fancy to her, and make her better and happier than she is now, poor girl—that I do!"

"Perhaps some one will," replied Ralph gravely. "But now I must wish you good morning; and you will all be sure to come and dine with me on Thursday next, at six o'clock remember!"

"O yes! sure!" said Mrs. Lorton. "I am only sorry that poor dear Mrs. Wynter will not be at table with us. You should have a Mrs. Wynter of your own, and then it would not so much signify;" she added, pressing his hand and breathing very hard.

"O! that will never be!" laughed Ralph. "The church is my wife—I shall never have another!"

"What nonsense, Mr. Wynter!—a young man like you!" remonstrated the Captain's wife; "you

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should marry I tell you—indeed you should! A nice house and every thing—you ought to take a wife; so now!"

"If no one would have me?" he said, trying to laugh again, but flushing a very deep crimson instead.

"I'd like to see the girl who would refuse you!" breathed out Mrs. Lorton.

"Ah! you are a flatterer," returned the young rector, and hurried away in a strange glow of pleasure and of trouble.

"I think I did some good," soliloquized Mrs. Lorton complacently, as she folded her plump hands in her lap and sat looking out of the window for a time, until she fell asleep—as she usually did twice or thrice in the day.

Mrs. Wynter was glad to see Lizzie again when the day of the dinner-party came; and received her with even more than ordinary kindness. She was surprised to

find how much she had missed the girl she had "not taken to," and how much more monotonous her life had been without that stormy turbulence to give it both colour and excitement. At a glance she saw the

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change which had taken place in her. Not the cause of it, for Ainslie had not yet arrived; and as she had heard nothing special of the new acquaintance she suspected nothing; but it was evident that there had been some great stirring of the depths, whatever the cause or motive, and that the girl had passed through a new experience of life, since last she had stood by her couch. What was it? A little apprehensively she looked at her son, watching his face and hers as they talked together by the oriel window, standing apart from the rest and speaking in a low key. But though Ralph was unlike himself, with a nervous flutter of manner and a certain plaintive look in his eyes that went to his mother's heart like the announcement of some great sorrow, yet Lizzie answered with such real indifference—not the simulated coldness of one who wishes to conceal her secret—that Mrs. Wynter was soon convinced it was not love for him that had broken up the deep places and opened the sealed fountains. What then could it be that had changed the girl's whole moral bearing, and that now lay like an actual presence on her face?

"Where have you been all this long while;

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dear Miss Lorton?" she asked, beckoning her to her side. "It is an age since I have seen you."

Lizzie blushed. "I have been no where,"she answered, coming nearer to the couch.

"Then what have you been doing?"

"Nothing particular—nothing. I don't know what I have been doing," confusedly.

"You have been doing your duties, I am sure? You have been among the poor, have you not?"

"Not much lately," Lizzie answered nervously.

"No? You have not wearied of your work, my dear?"

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"I have not had time—I have been very busy lately," Lizzie answered, looking down and forgetting in her confusion the confession of vacant hours she had just made.

"Ah, missy! that is a bad excuse!" returned Mrs. Wynter gently. "Nothing should ever stand between us and our duty."

Lizzie stood silent. She had nothing to say, for Mrs. Wynter only echoed the accusations of her own conscience, when she would listen to it;

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and while she stood thus, her head bent, and her dark eyes veiled beneath their broad lids, Luke Hogarth, followed by Mark and Ainslie, came into the room.

Grace had gone upstairs under the tutelage of Mrs. Wynter's maid; for as they had all ridden over, and as a heavy riding skirt is not the best kind of envelope for a muslin dinner-dress, she wanted a good deal of shaking out and smoothing down before she was fit to appear. And even when all was done she looked as crumpled, said Jackson the maid, as if she had come out of a clothes-bag.

As the men came in Lizzie's face turned ashen white. She did not look up, but stood, as she had been standing for the last few moments, bending her head and playing nervously with the lace on her handkerchief. She moved aside when Ainslie came to shake hands with Mrs. Wynter; but still she did not look up. This was the first time she had seen him in company, and she was over-powered with the love and shame possessing her. But when Ainslie took her hand, then the key of the riddle was given. The bashful eyes swiftly

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raised and as swiftly dropped—the sudden crimson breaking up the marble paleness—the tremor in the deep voice—the flickering smile—the confusion and abandonment of face and attitude—Mrs. Wynter needed to see no more. Lizzie Lorton was in love with Ainslie Forbes, the man who had saved her dear son's life but one short month ago!

Pray Heaven that Ralph had not had even a fancy to her-ward! But if he had—though why should she fear it?—pray Heaven then, that this new outbreak of the girl's undisciplined nature would show him how unsatisfactory she was—even if interesting to those who cared to strong souls from evil to good-and so would cure him without leaving a scar behind! If he must marry some one of the place, far rather Grace Hogarth, half-bred as she was, but whose fair and wholesome womanhood was of a quality better suited to a clergyman's house than this creature of fire and passion, thought Mrs.

Wynter, as bonny Grace came in, looking more like a thing out of a picture, or a Swiss girl in an opera, than an ordinary young Englishwoman of everyday life and habits.

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But she looked very pretty in her snippets and makeshift, odd as they were, and audacious as well as odd. Her skirt was of white, her bodice of blue, wild roses fell carelessly as if flung by chance among her untidy bright brown hair; she had a great bunch of flowers in her bosom, and a broad scarlet sash round her waist hid the shrinking of her diverse garments; she wore black silk mittens that had once belonged to her grandmother, and that came half way to her elbow; and by way of extra grandeur she had dug out of an old chest two big blue rosettes for her shoes. Of which no one would fail to be conscious, for they covered half her foot, and her crumpled white skirt did not come much below her ancle.

But if her dress was quaint and theatrical, it was picturesque and attractive enough, and made an excellent contrast to Lizzie in her high black lace with nothing but a few sprays of jasmine in her waistband. It was respectable too from a moral point of view, being an evident makeup out of odds and ends to save the expense of a new gown—father needing all his money for those

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risky shares of his, and Grace having a motive in accustoming herself to do with little—so that, though the poor young lady of the How was finely laughed at in the rectory kitchen to-day, she was more worthy of admiration than of ridicule: and so Mrs. Wynter said, after she had told her artless tale of how she had managed, and "hadn't she made, herself smart out of nothing, as one may say?"

Then dinner was announced, and the guests filed into the large dining hall with the encaustic tiles; and because so many of them were unaccustomed to such formal arrangements, they placed themselves "all to wrongs" at the table, said the servant afterwards; whereby Grace was led to the seat next Ralph, which he had designed for Lizzie, while Luke Hogarth placed that young lady next a vacant chair which Ainslie immediately took to himself, as naturally as if it had been prepared for him. It was too late to remedy things now, thought Ralph when they had all hustled themselves into their places; but he was annoyed at the mischance more than he cared to confess to himself; however, things

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must take their course now,—and so the dinner went on.

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That dinner was the happiest hour of Lizzie's life. Can none of us remember, when love was still unspoken and ill assured, the exquisite joy of small attentions paid in public? However thrilling the vague passages acted in secret, which implied all if even they did not formally confess, they were not equal in solid assurance to the word or look in public of not half the warmth. And specially is this true of women who have offered unsought, and given unasked. They suffer more than men from the sickness of doubt, because they have what men have not, the fear of shame lest their weakness should be betrayed, and their proffered gift rejected. The woman who stands with empty arms held out to one who passes with averted face, has gone down into the depths of such anguish as a man can never know; for her love rejected is worse to bear than laic trust betrayed, and her gift flung back leaves a deeper stain upon her cheek than his prayer denied.

This was what Lizzie felt to-night. She knew

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that she had allowed Ainslie to see that she loved him, and thus had placed herself at his mercy—and she knew the social shame she would incur were it ever told how she had flung herself at his feet, and mutely asked him to raise her to his heart. When therefore he had seated himself by her at table and devoted himself exclusively to her, she felt only that terrible gratitude of the loving woman—only pride and happiness in the false position in which she had placed herself; and this though she was a gentlewoman born and bred, and though he was a self-made man and the son of one who might have been her father's servant.

"You look like a goddess to-night," said Ainslie to her in a low voice. "How I wish that I was your companion god! How would you like a throne with me on the top of Mount Olympos—wasn't that the place where the old fellows lived?"

"A lower seat would content me," said Lizzie.

"You ought to have the highest in the land," said Ainslie gallantly, tossing off a glass of wine.

She looked at him, and her eyes said what her lips dared not, that a cottage-bench shared with

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him would be higher in her heart than a throne shared with another.

"I believe I could read your thoughts if you were suddenly struck dumb," said Ainslie, with eyes as eloquent as her own had been. "Your eyes are as expressive as any words could be—don't you feel them to be so?"

"I feel sometimes as if they said too much," Lizzie stammered.

"That cannot be—at least they cannot say too much to *me*," Ainslie said.

She looked up with that flickering plaintive smile of hers, and let her hand sweep over his, as she made pretence to pass the salt.

"You have no wine—let me give you what they call 'matrimony' in my country," then said Ainslie with a meaning look. "Shall I?"

She was silent. His tone was light, though his words had such a terrible significance—terrible in the sense that all deep emotion is terrible; but though she was silent she held her glass to him with a trembling hand, while he poured the wines together, smiling.

"We call that matrimony in my old home. Do

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you like it? Ah!" with a little sigh, flinging his hair from his forehead, "that is the only kind I shall ever know I fear!"

"Why do you say that?" said Lizzie faintly.

"Because I cannot afford to marry," he laughed with a forced kind of air; "but that does not prevent my—" "loving" he was going to say; he checked himself in time and substituted admiring. And then because a certain sickly disappointment came upon the girl's face he took back his caution, and added recklessly, "admiring and loving."

"Whoever you loved would love you," said Lizzie in a low voice.

"I would only care for one," he answered. "If she cared for me, all the rest might go as it liked."

"I do not think you need have any doubt on that head," replied Lizzie very slowly, and with an almost painful difficulty of articulation.

So little used to self-control, the strain was almost too much for her, and she was becoming afraid of herself. She felt every instant as if she must do something outrageous—as if that dinner hour would never pass without some tremendous

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exposure—some violent outburst that would commit her for ever in the place. Perhaps Ainsliewas afraid of the same thing; for soon after this he turned to Mark, who was sitting next him, and talked on indifferent subjects with only half his brain, and with not half his heart

When the cloth was withdrawn Ralph rose in his place and made a speech. He said that he had asked his friends that day, not only for the pleasure of seeing them, which as friends and parishioners both was a very great pleasure, and one that he hoped would often recur—but also to offer as public a recognition of the heroic service, that had been rendered him, as was possible in their small society. He had asked them to join with him in his heartfelt thanks to Ainslie Forbes, and to express their admiration of the daring that had saved the life of a fellow-creature at the risk of his own. With more of the same kind, spoken in Ralph's fluent scholarly manner—not a word misplaced—not the hesitation of a second—neat, careful, clerical, and yet with a full true human emotion underneath.

And then they drank the young superintend-

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ent's health—ladies and all. Mrs. Lorton smiled placidly; and Grace said "Good health, Mr. Forbes," in her clear birdlike treble; Captain Lorton bowed and said "Your health, sir," coldly—and the "sir" was the address of the superior to his inferior; Luke Hogarth, reaching behind Lizzie, slapped Ainslie on the back with a sly wink, saying in his "fine Cumberland," "Here's to you, Forbes my lad, and may we never want such a friend at a pinch—hey, lad!" Mark jerked his head in a sideway nod, and said "Here's your health, Ainslie," heartily; while Lizzie, flushed and trembling, only bowed without speaking as she lifted her glass slowly to her lips. But—was, it chance?—their hands met underneath the table in a long strict nervous grasp.

Then Ainslie rose and returned thanks; and because he was excited and heady with full-fed vanity, he made a very silly and. pretentious speech, accepting while deprecating the heroism they ascribed to him, offering his back for any amount of patting the Langthwaite public liked to bestow, and complacently mounting the pedestal which it pleased them to erect. All very natural

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and very pardonable; but by no means of they highest class of manliness, nor in the most admirable taste.

Even Lizzie, infatuated as she was, felt that she would rather he had not spoken as he did. The difference between the two men—between Ralph and him was painfully apparent even to her. The one such a thorough gentleman—accent, speech, gesture, all so polished and refined, so full of the unconscious dignity of a man sure of himself—the other with the swagger and the boast and that undefinable want more expressive still, which marked him just as plainly of the "second set," and "not a gentleman."

As for Ainslie himself he was too happy and excited to be conscious of failure or shortcoming. Praised and treated as an equal by men hitherto his social superiors, flattered by the loveliest girl he had ever known, and one as much above his original condition as the rest, on thoroughly good terms with himself, fascinated if not soberly in love, on the highway to success, young, facile, and quick-blooded—his veins ran with a pleasant leaping current that swept away all doubt or possible

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humility. And as he stood there with one hand on his hip, the other every now and then tossing back his hair, uttering his thinly-veiled boasts in that rich full mellow voice of his, standing, the very impersonation of manly strength and exuberant life, even the dry old Captain almost forgave the bad taste and brag, for the sake of the beauty and the gallant bearing, the generous openness and the honest heart, which at least were saving clauses.

And then, intoxicated with a more subtle potency than wine, Ainslie said one or two things to Lizzie which distinctly passed the fine boundary between flirting and love-making, hitherto not positively transgressed. When he went home and his brain began to cool, and he remembered all that he had said and done, he was shocked and angry with himself; for though he was vain and therefore weak, and impressionable and therefore unstable, he was neither heartless nor, dishonourable.

"By Jove, it is going too far!" he thought, as he sat on big square black seaman's chest in his own room at Dale Head, and lived back the last

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six hours; "I am a villain!—for though I like the girl well enough, yet I do not really love her. She has flung herself at me in a way few men could resist—and I am not one of them!—but still she is not my choice. I know that, and yet I am being dragged into a dishonourable entanglement by my cursed vanity and weakness. I have nothing to marry on; and I have no right to look yet for a girl in her position, if even she had an income of her own—which I don't suppose she has. Her father would never consent to such a

match for her—the miserably paid superintendent of a beggarly little mine out here in the wilds, lodging at a farm-house, and treated as an equal by men very little better than day labourers! I must draw in. To the devil with the girl! she has bewitched me! To the devil with my own weakness rather! which my mother always told me would be my ruin. And there's that poor fellow Wynter. I know that I did nothing so wonderful in pulling him out of such a herring-pond as that!—and Hogarth and the Dowthwaites, who are true men, know it too. There was not an ounce of danger in it, and I liked the fun of

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showing off before two pretty girls. Yet I have let myself be praised and flattered, as if I had really risked my life as that poor good fellow says. And I who pretend to be manlier than others! I am a pitiful hound, and God knows it if men don't!"

But though these self-accusations were perfectly genuine at the time, and though Ainslie did honestly mean to draw in as he said, and give up his pleasant dangers before too late, yet when the next day came, he dressed himself with unusual care—looking with longing eyes to the sky to see what the day was to be. For the Langthwaite people were coming over to Dale Head to-day to visit the mines under his escort—beautiful bewildering Lizzie Lorton one of the party.

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CHAPTER XI.

CONSCIENCE.

IT had been arranged that Ralph, Captain Lorton, and Lizzie should all go together to Dale Head where 'the trysting-place was to be, and a dales-man's "snack" or luncheon for refreshment, before visiting the mines. But when the time came for setting out, and the wretched old car jingled up from the Nag's Head to Greyrigg, the Captain was no where to be found. His memory had served him well enough for this once, and remembering betimes to what he stood pledged, he had silently left the house; and while the car was rumbling up the road, was dangling his lean legs over the crest of Raven Crag, tranquilly enjoying his latest unique edition. So Lizzie, now that her father had deserted her, had to jingle up to Ralph's famous oaken door alone, with the prospect of a long lonely drive to follow; under her present condition of feeling by no means an exhilarating prospect.

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Ralph was not at home when she arrived. "He had gone out," said the servant, "but would not be long—would Miss Lorton go in? Mrs. Wynter wanted to see her."

And Lizzie, feeling entrapped and imprisoned, and as if she was not to go to Haverbrack to-day, came out of the car, and followed the servant into the pretty, bright, delightful room as if she had .been following him into a dungeon.

"Well, my dear, where is papa?" asked Mrs. Wynter as she entered.

"We don't know—he has disappeared—gone up Styebarrow very likely," replied Lizzie.

"Did he not like the idea of the excursion?"

"I suppose not-he never likes any thing!" disdainfully.

"You got home well last night? Mamma took no cold?"

"Not that I know of," said Mrs. Lorton's stepdaughter indifferently.

"Come and sit down by me, my dear," then said Mrs. Wynter quietly; "I want to have a few minutes' talk with you."

Her words sounded like a knell to Lizzie.

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She knew what was coming. She knew that she had betrayed herself yesterday, and also that she had disappointed her friend by her late falling off; and, girl-like, she dreaded the remonstrance that was sure to come some time or other.

But how could she have continued her visits to the sick when, at the very moment that she was in their stifling cottages, reading with her mind and heart away, Ainslie might have passed, and she have missed him for the day by just so much? If it was sinful to care more for seeing Ainslie Forbes than for any thing else in life, well! She must be sinful then! She was sorry that she was wicked, and sorry if Mrs. Wynter was vexed, but one could not help it; and if trying to be good meant voluntarily giving up one single moment of Ainslie's presence, she was not going to try, whatever any one said!

This was the sum of her thoughts as she drew a chair by the side of the couch and sat down, pouting and defiant.

"Will Mr. Wynter be long?" she asked uncomfortably.

"About half an hour, I think. He has gone

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to Beekstanes to see poor Hester Nicholson, and cannot be back before, at the soonest."

Half an hour! it sounded like half an age!

"How tiresome!" cried Lizzie in a tone of vexation; "we shall keep them all waiting!"

"Yes, I am afraid you will," returned Mrs. Wynter quietly; "but duty you know," smiling.

"Yes, but we have duties to ladies and gentlemen as well as to common people," said Lizzie haughtily.

"Just so; but we must judge for ourselves which is the more imperative of the two. As in this instance—what ought my son to have done—to have kept the very moment of an engagement for pleasure, or to have gone to a dying woman who sent for him?"

"It is very tiresome for all that," said Lizzie, pouting.

"You disappoint me," Mrs. Wynter said gravely.

Lizzie coloured. "I never expected that you would like me when you knew me," she answered. "You are not the kind of woman to like such a girl as I am."

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"You have no right to say no. It is because I do like you and feel an interest in yon that you disappoint me," Mrs. Wynter said.

"And how do I disappoint you?" the girl asked in a rebellious almost insolent tone.

"I thought you were going to be wise and good, and that you would conscientiously follow out the plan of life we had traced for you, and yet in less than three, months you have wearied of it, and of late have abandoned it altogether. That is how and why," replied Mrs. Wynter firmly, looking fixedly into the girl's crimsoning face. "You have given up all the good things you had begun," she continued—"your visits to the sick, your Sunday-school class, even your choir singing and your organ lessons. Have I not cause then to be disappointed?—I who so earnestly wish you well,

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who pray for you night and morning, my child, as if I was your real mother, and answerable to God for your salvation?" This she said very tenderly, very lovingly, her accent softening as she went on.

The tears came into the girl's eyes, but she did not answer. She sat playing with the tassel of

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her parasol, flushed and quivering, but not really softened; and Mrs. Wynter was bent on softening her if possible to-day.

"Some unhappy change has taken place with you of late, my child," she then continued. "Whatever the cause, beware of it, for no good can come of an influence the first fruits of which are neglect of duties and care for pleasure only."

"Care for pleasure only!" echoed Lizzie. "There is not much pleasure in one's life at Langthwaite!"

"Which makes the falling away from duty a greater sin, if you have not even the bad excuse of temptation. But that answer cannot satisfy me! I do not ask your confidence, Lizzie—unless given of your own free will, it would be useless; but if you could give it to me I might help you!"

She took the girl's hand in hers, and held it tenderly. "I would like to help you, child!" she added very affectionately.

Tears were falling fast from the downcast eyes now, but still Lizzie did not speak.

"I would not say all this if you were on such

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terms with your mother as you ought to be," continued Mrs. Wynter; "but in the painful loneliness of your home life the advice of a woman made wise by long years of suffering might be of use to you."

"O, how I wish that I had had a mother!" cried Lizzie, catching at the word. "If only poor mamma had lived, how different my life would have been!"

"Let me be that mother in her stead!" Mrs. Wynter said tenderly.

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"No! that is not the same thing," Lizzie answered with an expressive gesture. "You care for me only for religion, you do not love me!"

"Is not that the highest kind of love? To bring you up to God as my spiritual child, of whose renewed life I am the mother?—is there no love in this?"

"But I want real love," persisted Lizzie; "I want people to care for me and not for my soul!"

"Well! teach me how to care for you, by your obedience and gentleness. Make me your mother, Lizzie Lorton; confide in me, trust me, let me help you, my child, my poor child!"

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Her voice trembled as she spoke, and Lizzie's heart throbbed to her words; but what could she my? Could she confess that she was in love with a man who had never asked her for her love?—that she was consuming her life in hope to win him who should have been the wooer? Could she confess to an initiative so utterly unwomanly as hers had been? What could she say? Shame and the very poverty of the facts to be confessed kept her silent. But Mrs. Wynter read something of the heart that dared not open itself; and if she did not know all, at least she knew enough to understand both the grief and the reticence.

"I wish you would go away for a time," she said with a little sigh, after a pause of vain waiting.

"No! no! I do not want to go away!" pleaded Lizzie. "I should be much more miserable if I were to go!"

"If you were my daughter I should send you away at once," returned Mrs. Wynter. "I know that you are not doing well here; and ah! how I grieve to see such gifts and powers perverted and overthrown!"

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"I am not worth caring for!" cried Lizzie, with a painful manner of despair and self-abhorrence. "I am too wicked for any one to care whether I go right or wrong."

"You will make me think so if you say such wicked things," said Mrs. Wynter gravely.

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Something in her manner struck on the girl with that strange intensity which at times seems to open up to us a heaven of pleasure or a hell of pain. She felt as if Mrs. Wynter had abandoned her for ever; and flinging herself down on her knees by the couch she buried her face in the crimson shawl falling to the ground, and burst into a violent flood of weeping.

"Forgive me if I have wounded you," said the lady gently. "I meant only your good. I did not mean to hurt you."

"No! no! you have not hurt me!" sobbed Lizzie. "It is I who am wicked, not you who have said any thing unkind. O! make me good!" she cried, feverishly grasping the thin hand lying like a withered white leaf against the crimson, and lifting up her eyes beseechingly.

"You must try and conquer yourself then,

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my dear, Mrs. Wynter said soothingly. "It makes it so difficult to keep you!"

"I wish I could!" said poor Lizzie, really making an honest effort to control herself, and partially succeeding; "but for as long as I can remember I have always cried so much, and for things which would not touch other people. I am a wretched passionate girl altogether, and it would be better if I died, and gave no one any more trouble. No one loves me, and I had better be dead and done with at once!"

"You are a silly girl, and a wicked one too for talking such nonsense," returned Mrs. Wynter. "You know that many people love you, and more still would love you if you were gentler and less passionate."

"I wish I could be good and gentle!" cried Lizzie despairingly. "I cannot! Good people are all so cold and tame, and I feel like a wild animal among them! They cannot feel as I do—they could never have felt, else they would not be what they are."

"How can you say that? Has no one more strength than yourself? Because you are weak

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and cannot subdue yourself—for remember! passion is not strength, though the passionate assume that it is, but it is mere weakness indeed—because you are weak and cowardly to your own soul, is no one else strong and courageous?"

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"It is not a question of weakness or courage," Lizzie answered. "It is an impossibility! If you yourself, Mrs. Wynter, felt as I do, you could not control yourself more than I do."

"You think so?" she smiled painfully. "But I would try! It is no pleasant task to conquer the old Adam; he is a formidable foe to us all; but by prayer and grace we prevail to the end. There are two orders of saints, my love—the saints by nature and the saints by grace. Why should you not be one of these last?—made and upheld by prayer."

"I do say my prayers," said Lizzie, "but they are of no use. I am no better for them."

"Say them till you are better then. No one that ever prayed faithfully and earnestly was left unanswered to the end. God never leaves us, even though He does not always immediately

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answer. He is near us in the darkness, if silent. Don't you believe this?"

"I don't know!" said Lizzie sorrowfully. "Others may be answered. I am not."

"Give me that little book, dear, on the table behind you—that with the red cross on the cover. Thank you. Now, see here is a prayer I should like you to use. Will you, child, for my sake—if for no higher motive?"

"Yes," said Lizzie bashfully.

"I will give you the Pietas, and you can take it with you. It may serve to remind you of this conversation, and when you are tempted to forget yourself—your better self—in some of your wild moods, may bring you back to the purer way. You promise to use that prayer morning and evening?"

"Yes," said Lizzie, kissing the pale face passionately.

At that moment she loved Mrs. Wynter with her whole heart as if she had been her mother; and for that brief moment she had forgotten Ainslie.

"I will try and be good," she said fervently;

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"I will go and see the poor again and do as you tell me, and then you will love me and perhaps God will help me!"

"Without the perhaps, my poor child!" said the invalid tenderly.

As she spoke the door-bell sounded, and Ralph's voice was heard questioning the driver; and then, instantly on this, the drawing-room door was opened, and he came into the room—his fair face flushed with his rapid walk, but full of the serene beauty that was always on it when he had been engaged in parish work, and looking his best in every way.

"I am so sorry I have kept you, Miss Lorton!" he said; "but poor Hester Nicholson sent up word to say that she wanted to see me, so I was obliged to go, you know."

"Of course," said Lizzie gently.

"I was very sorry to keep you waiting."

"It does not signify—we shall be in quite time enough—it cannot be helped," was the patient reply.

"You are very good, Miss Lorton!" cried Ralph enthusiastically, glancing at his mother;

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"I was sure you would not mind a little delay for such a cause."

"Poor Hester! how is she today?" asked Lizzie a little ashamedly. She had been one of her "patients" to whom she had read daily, before Ainslie came: and the one whose character had specially interested her.

"Dying," said Ralph. "I administered the holy Eucharist to her; she cannot last long I fear. Ah!" shaking his head and smiling sadly as well as reproachfully, and tenderly as well as both; "this was an opportunity to do a poor suffering creature great good, Miss Lorton! I am so grieved you have not seen her of late! And she is grieved too. She bade me give her duty to you, and say that she thanked you for all you had done for her, but that she had wanted you sadly of late, and had missed your bright face sorely."

"I will go and see her to-morrow, Mr. Wynter! cried Lizzie crimsoning, her eyes filling up again with tears. "I will indeed!"

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"She will not be alive to-morrow, my dear Miss Lorton," Ralph answered gravely; and Lizzie

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felt just a flash of the despair which accompanies the irremediable sin.

Mrs. Wynter kissed her as she went away; and said in a low voice—Ralph having left the room: "This will be a lesson to you, my child, will it not? Remember that neglected opportunities are God's offers refused. They do not come again; and our longing souls may cry in vain for a renewal of the occasion which came once in its day, and was rejected. You will throw off this fatal influence, whatever it is, that has so warped you of late? you will be dutiful and patient and self-denying? and try to find your happiness in doing good?"

"Yes," said Lizzie fervently. And she meant it.

Then she got into the car with Ralph, and the two jolted through the village together, to Lizzie's unconcealed confusion. But Ralph understood as little as he would have understood a Chinese love-song had lie heard it, why she turned away her head and blushed so deeply when they passed by Wilkin Yanwath's, and when spruce, trim, well-bred Wilkin standing at his shop door

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with his hands in his pockets, quite like one of the Liverpool gentlemen whom it was his life's ambition to imitate, bowed to them both with something of a smile upon his face.

The drive threatened to be a silent one, for Ralph was thinking of poor Hester Nicholson for the one part—while, for the other, glad as he was to be with Lizzie, and pleased as he had been at her unwonted gentleness and forbearance just now, yet he had griefs against her that kept him preoccupied, and scarcely sure of his own feelings. He was pained that she had left off visiting the poor, and pained that she had drifted so strangely away from himself as she had done of late; and, though not jealous of Ainslie—that would have implied a knowledge of his own state, as well as of hers, which would have been embarrassing, to say the least of it yet he was galled at her absorption in him yesterday, and her marked indifference to himself

One thing especially had distressed him. She had refused to sing with him when he had asked her; but when Ainslie had entreated for a song, she had sung that exquisite ballad of Lover's,

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"What would you do, love?" with all the fervour and pathos of her nature—sung it as she had never sung before—with a certain outgoing of soul, a certain passionate abandonment, that went through the room like an electric shock. And Ralph was grieved, and distressed, and uncertain, and not himself in any way. But as he watched her beautiful face all other feelings were gradually absorbed in the one deep gladness of finding himself alone with her again—like old times he thought—with no third life to stand between them.

"I was so glad to see you with my mother when I came in," he said suddenly.

She smiled gently.

"Why?" she asked.

"She does you more good than any one else," said Ralph quite simply.

Lizzie coloured, and her eyes grew a little too bright.

"I wonder why every one speaks of me in that tone!" she said with a forced laugh. "What is there about me that wants so much good being done to, I wonder?"

"What there is about us all," said Ralph

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gravely. "No more about you than about me, but the same with us all."

She was silent.

"I meant only this," he added.

Still she kept silence, looking uncomfortably before her into vacancy. Ralph's words had been unlucky. Oftentimes one grain more added to what has already turned the scale to the right will warp it to the left again; and Ralph's unfortunate speech now destroyed all that his mother had laboured to build up. The one had touched her conscience, but the other roused her pride.

"Yes, but you do not talk so of others, or to others," said Lizzie after a long pause. "It is only I who am supposed to be such a dreadful wretch and so awfully in want of reforming! Why! what have I ever done? One would think I had committed murder to hear the way in which I am spoken of sometimes!"

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"I have never spoken of you disrespectfully, dear Miss Lorton," cried Ralph, hurried out of himself by the fear of having wounded her. "How could I, when I think that you are the dearest and best creature in the world?"

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He took her hand; but she very gravely withdrew it.

"Don't talk nonsense, Mr. Wynter," she said; "else I shall think that you are laughing at me."

Then, fearful that he should renew his unwelcome demonstrations, she began talking fast and fluently about a thousand insignificant things; and, unless he was prepared to make a formal offer, Ralph could not find a gap wherein to thrust edgewise another tender word.

But he liked her all the better for the repulse. It showed reticence he thought, and maidenly reserve and coyness, and it pleased him more than if she had accepted his words as meant either in jest or earnest.

And while he was thinking this—both having relapsed into silence again—Lizzie, forgetting him and her momentary fit of angry pride alike, was straining her eyes upon the road, marking off as so much sorrow and weariness set behind her every point that showed them nearer to their journey's end. Now the lake was narrowing to a mere river's breadth as they were nearing the

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foot; now the weary hill, made by the outermost spur of Langthwaite Lowfell, was surmounted; now the sharp pitch down the other side was safely accomplished; now the heavy track, by courtesy called a road, that led through Wastdale Valley up to Dale Head, was struck, and now it was almost traversed, and the Dale Head ivied chimneys and gray stone walls were brought nearer and nearer to them; and now she heard the barking of the dogs, and now the voices of the men—that one dear voice heard clearer than them all!—while her heart was throbbing so that she could scarcely breathe; and her eyes were swimming with delight; and the remembrance of her talk with Mrs. Wynter, and all her good resolves, were fading away into thin air, as the moment came which should give her once more the blessed joy of Ainslie's beloved presence. But with one last expiring effort she said softly to herself as the car drove up to the house: "Pray God make me a good girl to-day!"

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CHAPTER XII.

THE KING OF WASTDALE AT HOME.

DALE HEAD was no gentleman's house with trim gardens, neat servants, and modern appointments. Though belonging to the most influential man in the parish, and one who could make head against the very rector himself, it was just a lone, low, desolate-looking farm house at the head of a dreary dale, with patches of cultivated ground snatched from the fell and the waste, fenced in by gray stone walls as if to keep out enemies or wild beasts; with byre and stable, "shippon," pigstye and granary, and all other needful farm buildings attached; but all of the rudest description, and without a pretence of artificial beauty about their rough old-fashioned quaintness. But the kindly growths of time and nature had given that beauty which man and art had denied; and the thick covering of ivy and wild roses that grew

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over the old stone faces every where, the soft mosses, and feathery ferns, and tangled honey-suckle, and climbing briony about the walls and stunted shrubs made Dale Head the most picturesque place in the country.

To the rear lay the kitchen garden and what passed for the orchard, the fruit of which rarely ripened—save indeed the "berries" for which Dale Head was famous; but all the rest was "chancy," and for the most part a failure. Along the house-side were flower-beds full of dear old-fashioned cottage flowers, amongst which a venerable plant of southernwood, or as he called it "sither-wood" or "old man," was Jobby's especial favourite—a sprig always adorning his buttonhole on Sundays so long as there-was a tuft of fragrant threads left upon the woody stem. Fronting the house was the narrow green dale, hemmed in by the Langthwaite crags on the one side, and by the Hartlop fells, a flank of Green Coom, on the other; and down the middle of the dale ran the little Wastdale beck, hurrying to join the larger Lang-beck just as it issued from the mere; while far away in the distance glittered the slender line

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of the sea, shining like a silver band on the horizon.

The house was one of the ordinary old-fashioned farm houses of the country. The kitchen was the dwelling-room; a large, square, low-pitched, whitewashed room, banded with diagonals in black oak, and flagged, not boarded. There was an immense open fireplace, with dogs for peat and wood fires only; two large iron "ratten-crooks" and several smaller ones, for cauldrons and kettles, hung from the "rannel balk," or

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beam appropriated to that use; on one of these crooks swung the kettle, for though it was mid-summer there was a large fire upon the hearth; and a brandreth, or three-legged rim of iron on which is laid the flat plate of iron or girdle used for baking girdle cakes, barley scons, oatcake, and the like, was now standing over the piled-up embers. The mantelpiece was of carved black oak; across the low ceiling ran two wooden shelves, loaded with cheeses, jam-pots, and wine-bottles; bunches of sweet herbs hung by their heels on the walls, which were farther garnished with a few books in swinging-shelves, some com-

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mon prints in black frames, an old sampler done by Mrs. Dowthwaite's grandmother, who had been a Cloudsdale when the Cloudsdales were Langthwaite potentates, a Romish relic preserved as "ane o't curiousest things we hev," but not understood as to what it was; and other "oddments" of the same kind. On the mantelpiece stood some pewter and brass concerns dear to housekeepers, all shining as bright as so much gold and silver; three guns—one loaded—hung on wooden rests above; against the wall was a magnificent carved black oak press, date 1623, a carved black oak clockcase, two high-backed black oak chairs, and a beautiful little ebony teacaddy, of the best Japanese work, brought by some adventurous Dowthwaite from over seas generations ago. And in this ebony teacaddy was a goblet of old Venetian glass, very rare and beautiful, with the holy monogram on the one side, and S. M. V. beneath a lily on the other. And which goblet, called the Dowthwaite Luck, like the Musgrave's Luck of Edenhall, Aggy, and even Jobby himself—though by no means a superstitions man—regarded with profound and trembling reverence,

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as bound up with the fortunes of the family; believing that should it be broken, then would the Dowthwaites certainly fall, never to rise again. As is also the Musgrave faith; not without reason.

A settle was placed along one side of the fire-place; at the other was the master's seat—a modern arm-chair with a blue checked linen cushion. A bedstead shrouded in blue checked curtains of the same material stood in a recess in the darkest part of the kitchen; four doors opened out of the room at various points; the window, also with the same blue checked curtains, was a latticed casement; and there were fuschias and geraniums in broken jugs and pots and basins along the inner sill. There was no oven; and Aggy baked her wheaten bread in iron saucepans, putting fire into the down-turned lid as well as underneath, thus making a sort of movable oven of her own.

As the car drove up a crowd of yelping collies rushed out, barking furiously, bringing out Mark and Grace and Ainslie to the welcome. But Lizzie knew nothing save that Ainslie Forbes was standing there before her. The world else

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all faded from her eyes; and as she laid her hand in his and felt the warm strong pressure with which he greeted her, what Grace and Mark and Ralph might see, her promises to Mrs. Wynter, poor dying Hector Nicholson, her tears of self-reproach, her prayers, her good desires—all fell from her like bands of burning tow, and she knew only that she loved, and cared only to be beloved.

Then Jobby, tall, keen, upright, with the self-possession of a lord if with the shouldering gait and uncouth accent of a peasant, came slowly out of the house, dressed in his ordinary working clothes—not the dress he kept for extra "clashy and clarty wark," but just his everyday fawn-coloured jeans and corduroys—that too being one of his expressions of independence; and after him came Luke in his green cutaway with brass buttons and blue bird's-eye scarf, bearing the stamp of the sporting man in every feature of his keen good-humoured face and well knit "light weight" figure. Aggy woman, buxom and broad-bosomed, stood within the door; and shy Elcy with her golden hair gathered into a bunch on to the top of her head, and in her blue " second beat," which

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was without rents, pretended to be absorbed in the a "gridle cakes" as an excuse for not coming to the front with the rest.

"Ye're kindly welcome," said Jobby, offering his huge hand to Ralph. "I'se pleased to see ye at Dale Head; and what! ye've brocht a fine day along wi' ye."

"Yes, it's a grand day indeed," said Ralph; "will it keep fair, do you think, Mr. Dowthwaite?"

"I'se ensure ye! There'll be nae weet coom morning, I'll engage! The kelds is on t' lake—didn't ye mind them, as ye coomed?—an't sop came oop ower Green Coom at six, an' ganged awa' til't sea; an' that's a sure sign o' fine weather for fowre an' twenty hours, if iver there was ane."

"The sop? what is the sop? I don't think I have heard of that," asked Ralph.

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"Not heerd tell of t' sop? Why, t' sop's a lile wee cloud as cooms cop ower Green Coom—Green Coom sop is't be rights; an' if it gangs awa' til't sea, we hes fine weather for fowre an' twenty hours at least, an' if it gangs awa' back'ard

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til't mountains, we hes weet for fowre an' twenty hours. Aye, t'sop's a gay gude weather-glass, that is't. Weel, missie," he continued, turning to Lizzie, "an' how's t' life Lily?—not dune for ye yit?"

"No, not yet," said Lizzie a little confusedly. She never knew how to bear herself to the Dowthwaites; certainly not as an equal, and yet she would not treat them quite like common people."

"Have a care, miss! she's a kittle coostomer is yon—she'll mash ye oop yit, if ye divn't kep a sharp luke oot," returned Jobby.

"I have not been out in her lately," said Lizzie; and she glanced at Ainslie.

"Nay! I thocht I hedn't seed ye! I mind when I du, for I divn't deny that ye mak a pretty-some kind o' thing to luke at, ye an' yer life blue boat; but sakes alive! it's ower lang a bill to pay for Iuking prettysome on't watter if ye've got to gang doun intil't, an bide thier!"

"Miss Lorton is going to give up that boat to please me, Mr. Dowthwaite," said Ralph laughing.

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"Mr. Wynter! how can you tell such a story? I am not going to give it up to please any body!" cried Lizzie with an indignation that was quite unaffected.

"But if I ask you?" said Ralph, looking at her tenderly.

"That would make no difference. I would not give up the Lily for any one in the world!" Lizzie answered, disdainfully.

Ainslie was standing near her, looking from Ralph to her curiously. He seemed struck by the rector's manner and expression of face, for without knowing it Ralph had looked at her with real love, and had used a peculiar tone of affectionate right that indeed struck them all. Had not Lizzie's answer been so disdainful and abrupt, Dale Head would have had no doubt but that Lizzie and the rector were "a match;" but girls

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in love do not speak to their lovers as she spoke just now to him, so the Dale Head certainty did not hold.

After Ainslie had watched them for a few seconds he went out into the open air again—for they had all come in by now—and stood by

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the low wall fronting the windows, looking down the dale and to the sea beyond, whistling.

"An' a varra gude thing too, Mr. Wynter, gin ye can persuade her," said Aggy. "I oft say wi' my master that Miss Lizzie there'll coom to some ter'ble ill if she favours that nasty life thing. She's tied to turn boddom up'most ane o' these days; so Miss Lizzie, my dear, divn't be stupid"—she meant obstinate—"but let yersel be guided by them as knaws best."

Lizzie did not answer. She was watching Ainslie's head through the latticed window, understanding quite well what he was thinking, and hating Ralph fiercely for the false impression he had conveyed.

Grace saw it all. Even in the most diverse natures among young women there is a wonderful freemasonry and perception not to be acquired by any one else. As she did not care what she did—being as unguarded through innocence as Lizzie was by recklessness—she went out into the front, and touching Ainslie's arm said laughingly, "A penny for your thoughts, Mr. Forbes!"

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"Not worth a farthing, Miss Grace," he answered.

"I would not let your enemy say so!" was her shrill reply.

"I have only one," said Ainslie Forbes a little gloomily.

It was not often that he was Byronic, but even he, with all his brightness and commonsense, had that faculty on rare occasions.

"Only one enemy? My gracious, that's not enough to kill a man! And who's he, I'd like to know?"

"Myself, Miss Grace."

"Then don't you think that's rather daft of you, Mr. Forbes?—and wouldn't it be more wise-like in you to be your own friend instead?" was Grace Hogarth's wondering philosophy.

"Very true; but it is not always easy to do right," said Ainslie.

"O, it ain't so difficult," said Grace innocently.

"Not for you perhaps, but we men are different. We are a bad lot from first to last—it's you women that are the angels."

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"Hoot! did ever any one hear the like of such nonsense I Men are every bit as good as women, and some of them 'a deal better; and if these are your thoughts they ain't worth a penny, and you said quite right. I would give a penny if I was you to get quit of them; so you'd best let them alone and come back into the house with me. They're going to set the table directly, and I'm only poor company for you."

"I am best away," he said, still with that rare Byronic gloom upon him.

"How can you talk such a nonsense?" she cried. "Why what ever has put you out of the way, Mr. Forbes? You ain't, yourself anyhow. What is it now?"

"Nothing," said Ainslie.

"Well, it can't be less," Grace answered simply. "But what is it now? I can see quite well that you are not suited about something, but I can't see what it is."

There was a short silence; then Ainslie, coming nearer to the girl, still both in view of the kitchen window, and Lizzie's eyes fixed upon them, said in a low voice, "Tell me, Miss Ho-

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garth—just the truth; and you may rely on my never mentioning it again—when I first came here, or before I came, was there any thing between Miss Lorton and Mr. Wynter? Were they engaged or in love?"

"My gracious goodness me I what can have put that into your head, Mr. Forbes?" cried Grace with genuine surprise. "Mr. Wynter and Miss Lizzie!—goodness me if ever I heard of such a thing! why they are as unlike as chalk and cheese— No, I'm sure not— I'm sure that Miss Lizzie wouldn't for all the world. She don't like small men

she says, and Mr. Wynter's not her sort at all! Somebody else and she are much liker," added Grace slily.

"Well, hush, and don't be a silly girl!" said Ainslie; "and don't tell that I asked you the question."

"O, I ain't such a gowk or pie neither!" called out Grace. "So, if that's all's to do with you, you had better come in; for I can see Miss Lizzie looking as black as thunder at us through the window. She will be in such a taking if we stay out much longer together, for maybe she'll

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think that I want to make up to you; and then, my word! she'll not be suited!"

"And somebody else won't," said Ainslie.

"Who? what, you? Well now! if that ain't a fine thing for a man to say!" Grace said, glancing up with the innocent but not over wise coquetry peculiarly her own. "Well if ever, Mr. Forbes! I did think you'd been more polite, I must say!"

"You know very well what I meant, you teasing puss," said Ainslie Forbes—familiarity of manner to women being one of the uncomfortable signs which stamped him as "not a gentleman." " I mean Mark; and you know I do."

"Go along with your nonsense!" laughed Grace. " I've a great mind to box your ears, that I have!"

"If you do!" said Ainslie.

"Nay now, you daren't!" cried Grace. "Miss Lizzie's looking, and so you just daren't!"

After which little passage of arms they both went back to the house again; and Grace helped Aggy and Elcy to "set the table" and put on the "snack," whereby she obtained an opportunity

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for a little sly romping with Mark unbeknown to the authorities, who would have very soon put an end to it had they seen it.

It was a real north-country "snack" which the Dowthwaites set upon the table—a meal not counting as a dinner, and made up in a hurry with what was already in the

house. The long deal table against the window was covered with a white coarse square of diaper smelling of the apples which were always kept among the linen as favourable perfume; mugs, a few rammers, and Jobby's pewter pot made up the drinking vessels; the spoons were of yellow-tinged Britannia metal, and the forks were three-pronged steel; the knives had round buck-horn handles, and the blades came out in a half circle at the top for the better "lifting" of peas. There were sundry jugs and bottles—one with fresh milk, and one with butter-milk; one of gin cordial, and one of gin not cordial; one of gooseberry wine, called berry-wine, for the ladies; and one of blackberry wine, called bumble-kite, for a difference. There was a wheaten loaf, baked in the iron pot, and a wooden trencher filled with fresh crisp "havre

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bread" (thin oat cake); there was a plate piled up with hot girdle cakes; a "berry" cake, with the crust an inch thick, and not digestible; some gingerbread snaps; a jug of cream and a pot of preserves to eat with it; and then, as the *pièces de résistance*, a dish of mutton ham and poached eggs, and half a country cheese.

"Noo then, gentlemen and ladies, sit doun and fa' to," said Jobby, taking the head of the long table. "Help yersels as ye've a mind, and divn't spare t' vittel. Coom, Mr. Wynter; coom, Miss Lizzie; Luke mon, thou can set thyself; and what! Mr. Forbes, he's at hame. Grace, my lass, coom up here by me; and noo, Mr. Wynter, sir, by yer leave we'll say a blessing."

Mark, with the help of Grace and on her hint, manoeuvred that Lizzie and Ainslie should sit together; but Lizzie was obliged to be more guarded in her manners than she had been last night; for slow-speaking old Jobby was "cute as a fox," while broad-bosomed Aggy was "keen as a wamp" on all matters connected with love-making, and lost nothing that eyes could see or ears could hear. And even as it was, she said

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afterwards that "Miss Lizzie and our Ainslie there looked like a match;" but Jobby rebuked her sternly. "Was she fule eneugh to think t' Cap'n's dochter wad cotton wid sic as him? Liker Grace Hoggart yonder! She was more his meat, an' ye will! for thof Luke might gie 'self airs noo, and haud oop's head wi' t' best on 'em, Luke's grandfather had been in t' mire; an' I doubt if Luke 'll git it rubbed off in t' lead mines," said Jobby slily.

Jobby liked having his sly thrusts at Luke. He would not have confessed it to save his life, but he was a little jealous of his newly risen and more flashily prosperous neighbour.

But now at table he was only hospitable and jocose; poking good-natured fun at Luke, and anxious to show Ralph that he opposed him on principle and officially only, but that privately he recognized his claims to respect, and wished to stand well with him. Dowthwaite of Wastdale defending time-honoured institutions against an irreligious innovation was one thing; but Wasd'le Jobby at home and at the head of his own table was another.

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"Help yersels," he said frequently. "Here's plenty for a' on ye, an' mair whar this comes frae. Ye're gaily welcome, mind ye! Weel, Luke mon, what new-fashioned fandanglements is oop noo? Hoo's t' lead; an' when's te ganging to buy us a' oop, stoop an' crop? Gosh! but thou's a daft 'n as iver I seed i' my life. Stick to thy land, mon! Land canna rin awa'!"

"No more can mines, Jobby," said Luke, with his mouth full of mutton ham.

"Nay! minds nobbut sink; they divn't rin, sauf wi' daft folks' brass," said Jobby, laughing at his own wit.

"The yield is very hopeful though—I think you said so yesterday, Forbes?" said Ralph, turning to Ainslie.

"First rate! we shall make a good thing of it before long, you will see," he answered. "The shareholders will be rich men, mark my words."

"Ay? sure! an' what dividen'?" asked Jobby.

"None yet, Mr. Dowthwaite," laughed Ainslie.

"Nay, an' niver will be ane; an' mark them as *my* words," said Jobby quietly.

"I'll give Elcy there a fairing out of t' first I

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have!" shouted Luke. "Elcy lass, think me on when the time comes."

"I doubt, lass, if thou niver gits a sweetheart till Luke gies thee a golden guinea free Haver-brack, thou'lt has to gang widout a' thee life," said Jobby.

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"Ah, Jobby, I'll see ye converted yet!" said Luke.

"Niver, mon! I'se ower auld to change noo; an' I'se thinking our Jobby'll not be sae different after me, when I'se gane. Mark thier is o' t' new lights—isn't thee, Mark lad?"

"I don't know about new lights, father," Mark answered. "All I do know is that I'll never be the marras of you, new lights or old; and I doubt if any of us will."

"Ay! Mark allus stans weel oop for 's daddy!" cried Aggy from the fireplace. She and Elcy were serving, and did not sit at table with the rest.

Then Jobby turned to Ralph. "Weel, Mr. Wynter, an' hoos' a' at Langthut? Hev ye gitten mair at yer back yit? an' will ye be advised afoor it's too late to give in?"

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"No, certainly not!" said Ralph good temperedly; "I never give in, Mr. Dowthwaite."

"The varra marras o' me! *I* niver gives in nayther! Hoosumdever, we bet ye all at last vestry—top an' tail we bet ye!" chuckling.

"Ay, but, Jobby, time 'll beat you in the long run," put in Luke. "Besides, you forget the Bishop."

"Yes: I am afraid you will find a faculty too much for you, Mr. Dowthwaite," Ralph said smiling. "But we need not discuss that question now. Let us keep to the mining—the church comes another time."

"I like t'ane as life as t'other," said Jobby. "I consider a' that ye'se on hand, Mr. Wynter, as dounreet heathen wickedness; an' as for t' minds—nay what they're ter'ble bad for t'place if iver owt was!—sets men a' wrang, top an' boddom—mun mak theirsels quality, gude Lord! an' be rowling i' riches a' in a jiffey—eh, Luke?"

"Hoot, Jobby! they do good!" cried Luke; "bring new blood and new ideas into the place. I like to be one of the movers, and to go on with the rest."

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"Yis; I mind that i' thee, Luke; an' I like to be ane o' t' haudfasts."

" Why do you never come to the rectory and see my mother, Miss Dowthwaite?" asked Ralph, turning suddenly to Elcy, who, overwhelmed with confusion at being

spoken to, blushed and sidled like a skittish colt, and stole behind her mother's broad back with her finger in her mouth. "You know my mother is a great invalid and cannot get out," he continued; "yet she is so anxious to know all my parishioners, and to be on terms of true, Christian friendship with them. Why will you not come, eh? and why will you not take part in the singing?"

"Nay what, thank ye, Mr. Wynter, sir, but our Elcy's not ane o' that mak," said Aggy. "She's nobbut a daft lass as yit, fleyte to deeth if she's spokken to. I doubt if ye'd git a word frae her an' ye hed her; an' as for t' singing, I'd engage she'd not ken B frae a bull's foot if set to tune oop afore coompany. Will she gang, bairn, an' see what she can du?"

At which Elcy fled away into the dairy, all "flurts an' sniggles" as her mother said, and in

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as great trepidation as if she was going to be haled away bodily, whether she would or no.

"Canna du nowt wi'out t' mother yit!" Jobby said quietly, as if he was speaking of a calf or a colt to be taken from its dam.

Then came Ralph's turn for questioning.

"What do you do, Mr. Dowthwaite, in the winter time, when you have no farm work on hand—in the evening for instance?" he asked.

"O, we mannish! we jist du sic like—play at whist wi' ane anither, turn an' turn aboot. Whiles we gang to Luke's yonder, an' whiles to Flemings'—them's them in t' farm on t' left yonder—an' whiles they cooms here; but we mannish weel eneugh, I'se warran' ye!"

"But sometimes the dale is bad for travelling, I should think?"

"Bad travelling? I'se insure ye! O' winter times I'se ken't a' t' dale snawed oop, an' not a body on us a' able to stir frae 's ain garth! Ay, it's serious deep a' times is t' snaw."

"And then what do you do?"

"Du? i' what, Mr. Wynter?" said Jobby sharply. He did not like being questioned—no

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north-country person does; and no north-country person gives a direct answer if he can avoid it. "We du as weel as we can, an' lig a-beed when we canna du nowt else."

"But how do you get your meat and coals up to the house at such times?" asked the rector innocently.

"What meat? Gudesakes! t' snaw divn't rin awa' wi' t' meat!" said Jobby with a loud laugh. "Divn't ye ken, Mr. Wynter, that we kills for oursels in t' dales ? We divn't gang to Abel week by week like t' quality; we kill at t' back end o' t' summer, an' what we divn't eat fresh we sauts. That ham on yer plate's our ain; but we divn't cook meat ivery day. I mind nowt of meat ivery day for ony ane. Porridge, an' as mony on them as ye can soop;—kittly slip douns wi' a hantle o' cream—eggs, an' a lile soop gin—taties, an' sic like—but meat's nae use at a' for ivery day, an' divn't mak t' men as porridge du."

"And summer is the only time you kill?"

"Aye."

"And you never have fresh meat excepting then?"

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"Nay."

"No fowls or geese?"

"Aye, a guse a' Michaelmas-time; allus- a guse a' Michaelmas-time."

"But what do you do for fuel in the winter? how do you get your coals?"

"Coals? Dye think, Mr. Wynter, as hoo I'd hae them nasty clarty stuff i' my hoose? I'd not ken t' day when I set t' knees o' me afore a coal fire i' Dale Head! Nay! niver a ha'poth o' sic muck for me! We burns peat an' sticks—but peat mainly; maks a bonny fire peat du, and hes siccan a fine smell wi't! Dye think we'se savages, Mr. Wynter, wi'ont fire nor claes? I tell ye, there's a plenty for a' on us; an' if folk beant satisfized wi' plenty, it's a pity!"

"But what a lonely life!" cried Ralph.

"Aye, it's lonesome eneugh, an' dree eneugh a' times; an' mony wadn't tak til't—ye mun be born intil t' ways o' sic places, an' then they're weel eneugh. We'se gaily

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satisfized. Winter or summer, it's a' ane to me—I'se iver content. We hae t' fells, an' t' fresh air, an' we'se not fashed wi' clashes an' clavers like yer town folk—an' that's

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summut to mak a mon's life content, let me tell ye, Mr. Wynter. An' what! o' market days there's Caldton, whar we hear a' t' news; an' there's Langthut for t' women folk, whar they can gang an' hae their clashes, an' brossen wi' envy at Wilkin's trinkums an' farlies—an' that suits them. O! it's a fine life I'se insure ye! I wadn't not be a dalesman to be King o' England, an' that I tell ye! An' noo, Mr. Wynter, that I'se answert a' ye've asted, mappen you'll tell me why you've asted sic a might o' questions. What's to du? what's ye fishing at? Be ye gaun to write a buik, Mr. Wynter, an' pit us a' in as hoodiecraws an' heathen savages?"

Jobby said this not a little stiffly. He had not answered too generously throughout, the old instinct of suspicion rising stronger at every word Ralph said.

The rector laughed good-humouredly. "Not the least in the world, Mr. Dowthwaite," he said. "But can't you see—I am a stranger; yet as a clergyman I want to know all about my parishioners; and how can I do that unless I ask?"

"Ah weel! it may be a' reet as yer say,"

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Jobby answered; "but roe thinking I wadn't hae been questioned ony place but in my sin hoose."

"I hope that I have not annoyed you?" Ralph said pleasantly.

"I'se not best pleased, Mr. Wynter; but I'll tak it as ye say ye meant it, and believe yer woord that it's nobbut orkedness an' ignorance as a body may say. Sae here's til ye, an' mair gumption, Mr. Wynter," chuckling as he drank his glass.

"How will you bear it, Forbes, if you are snowed up in the winter?" asked Ralph of Ainslie.

"They must make a way for *me* somehow!" laughed Ainslie. "The mines must be served!"

"Mappen t' watter 'll hae sarra'd them afoor then," said Jobby drily. "That 'ud be t' mak o' sarra'ing I'd liefer see nor owt else!"

"And Matthew?" said Ainslie.

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"Mather? weel! if he's been sic a danged fule as to rin 's hand 'intil t' fire, he mun pay fort' skelping on't."

"It would be a pretty heavy skelping, by what he said to me," said Ainslie.

"He's tied t' lig as he's bigged,' said Jobby sternly. "If he's bigged on t' soughs, he mun

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gang intil t' mire. There's nae help for them as will gang wrang."

The subject was a painful one to him, and he never liked to talk of it; so sure was he that harm would come of it. He did not yet know how grave that harm would be I This Matthew, though he had never been a very satisfactory son—"a slape cat-witted taggelt" his father often called him, to signify his opinion that he was untrustworthy, conceited, and dissolute—yet for all that he was next to Mark in the old man's affections, and before Mark in Aggy's; being one of those easy-going, affectionate, loose-principled, and good looking fellows who are always home-favourites, indulged by mothers, idolised by sisters, yielded to by brothers, and given more than their share of the father's money; but who generally come to a bad end sooner or later through drink, debt, or worse—if indeed they do not bring the family to a bad end first of all.

Then, as if to throw off a disagreeable thought, Jobby began to "chaff' Ainslie, as he had already "chaffed" Luke and Ralph—laughing at that wonderful act of heroism in getting a wet jacket

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the other day, showing clearly how he held it as nothing more heroic than if he had walked across the fells or ridden down the dale; and letting it be seen too how much more really manly he would have thought it had Ainslie refused to be petted and made a fuss with for such a small matter. He had seen the weakness of the young man's character, and was always glad of an opportunity for "taking him down a peg," as he called it; saying confidentially to Aggy after such encounters: "T' lad hasn't a faut as I can mind on but that'n; an' if he culd nobbut git t' cock takken oot o' t' neb on him, he'd du gaily weal I'll engage. But he thinks ower much on hissel, an' wants a life bit skelping noon and thens to keep him doun."

But when he began to laugh at him now (how Ainslie wished he had not been so familiar to him before Lizzie, and had not "thoued" him so much!), Ralph and Grace and Aggy all put in their protests; and though Luke laughed with Jobby, and Mark was

silent, yet the women cried down the two older men, and Ainslie's banner still flaunted and his silver trumpet sounded, and

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Jobby's "skelping" did no good whatever. Indeed rather harm than good, in that it brought about a milder repetition of yesterday's oration by Ralph's fervid and affectionate remonstrance and acknowledgment.

But few words had passed between Lizzie and Ainslie as yet during the meal. Both were kept in order by the fear of being seen, and both were for the moment honestly endeavouring to "behave well" and not go too far—the one with her mute beseeching—her intentional fascination; the other with his dangerous flirtation. But Ainslie could not sit for ever silent—he must act as was only right and well-mannered in any man to a pretty woman; he must pay her some attention—Jobby's keen gray eyes notwithstanding; so, in the midst of a rather louder buzz than before, he said with wonderfully acted indifference, "I am glad to hear that you are giving up your boat, Miss Lorton, at Mr. Wynter's request. I would have given you the same advice myself had I dared; but it comes better from your clergyman, and will have more influence than from me."

Lizzie looked up into his face.

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"Why do you think that?" she naked in a low voice, playing with her fragments of oat cake, and massing them up into small piles with her little finger.

"It is only natural," answered Ainslie. "I think not," she said.

"Surely yes!—your clergyman—an older friend than I—of higher rank—with more means—in every way better suited to influence you!"

She looked up at him again; and her rich moleskin-coloured eyes, and what was in them, made Ainslie's heart throb almost as violently as her own.

"I think not," she said again. "Of the two you have the most influence over me—infinitely."

"Thank you," he said in a low soft whisper, and touched her hand, as if by chance; and Jobby almost caught them as he turned his eyes suddenly on Miss Lizzie and asked when she was going to send Elcy a "dream bit" of bridecake and have him as the "best man"?

A question which made the girl blush till the tears came into her eyes, which made Ralph's face crimson too, and which overthrew Ainslie's

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composure for the rest of the meal. For if he had stood in the way of a really suitable match, what a villain he had been! And yet, it had not been all his fault. She had sought him as much as he had sought her; and, after all, a man has two kinds of honour to a woman: and one is not to humiliate her by over prudishness, thought Ainslie Forbes, searching in his heart for self-excuses.

But he sat with his head turned rather away from her after this, and they had no more pleasant talk or too eloquent and expressive looks.

Then the time came when they must set out for the mines, if they wished to see them at all today; and they all rose up from table and arranged themselves for the journey. They went as they had come—Ralph and Lizzie alone in the car; and the rest on horseback—Grace, in her dark blue riding-skirt, her scarlet jacket, and her wonderful hat to-day wreathed round with black briony leaves and wild roses, looking more than ever like a picture, occupied mainly in convincing Mark that she loved him, and in convincing her father that she loved no one. For love, and cer-

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tain opposition if discovered, can make even Grace Hogarths two-edged.

Poor Lizzie was miserable; but she could not help herself. She could not ride with the rest, so was obliged to go in the car alone with Ralph—with him of all the people in the world, and after what had been said, and his stupid blushes, and her own!—obliged also to see Ainslie, for mere mischief and the jealous desire to give jealous pain, keep close to Grace, with whom he was talking as if earnestly and confidentially—she devoutly wishing him at the bottom of the lake, for distancing Mark, and cutting short her pleasure. Then, still affecting to consider Ralph Wynter as Miss Lorton's natural escort, he rode up to the car only at rare intervals, speaking to Ralph and not to her when he did come; and looking at her with eyes as glacial and hard as they had been warm and loving. So that altogether poor Lizzie's drive along the rough fellside road was one of the most wretched she had ever had.

Ralph, who could not get a word out of her, was obliged to accept that ever-convenient "head-ache" as an excuse for her sullen silence; and

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to find solace in fretting her still more, unconsciously, by every instant proposing something far her comfort—expressing his fear lest this jolt had made her head worse—or, should they turn back and go home to the rectory? the way was getting worse and she was suffering so much, he was sure!—and his mother would be so glad to have her again!—could he do any thing for her? would she take some belladonna, or some ignatia, or perhaps a little nux?—would she change places with him? his seemed the easier side—should they stop and walk, or should they not go back as he said before?

To all of which Lizzie scarcely deigned as answer; and the more sullen she became, the more intensely Ralph compassionated her, thinking how ill she must be to be so silent; and O! what could he do for her!

At last that most miserable drive ended—at last they toiled to the end of that steep and dreary miner's road, which seemed as if leading to the very home of desolation, and came to the works, where the riding party had arrived before them, and now stood waiting for them to come up;

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Ainslie feeling like the owner of an estate receiving a party of distinguished guests at his mansion, and showing off before them in various little ways of lordliness—commanding, directing, busying, and taking a boyish delight in his mastership, more natural perhaps than dignified. And when she came up to that desolate fellside station, rough and bleak and long as it was, Lizzie felt as if she had come to the gates of Eden, which an angel swung back for her to pass through, as Ainslie Forbes rushed to the side of the car, and assisted her to dismount.

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CHAPTER XIII.

DOWN THE MINE.

AT the works Ainslie acted showman and explained the various uses and processes—the crushing, the sifting, the sorting, the washing—what was good ore and what was bad—what was refuse and what might be turned to account—how the engine worked, and what amount of water it brought up in the day—with other things special to the concern.

And when he had done they were all just as wise as, before. They had seen some big stones, some mud-beplastered barrows, some huge wheels and some smaller ones, some long troughs full of shining stones, two lakes of dull gray mud, heaps of gray

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gravel, and hillocks of gray ore; they had seen an engine kept as bright and clean as my lord's best tankard, but inspiring both Grace and Lizzie with the greatest possible dread lest it

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should go off and scatter them to the four winds of heaven; they had seen a number of dirty men wheeling about these mud-beplastered barrows—the tossing, tumbling Hartlop beck looking as if made of whitened soup—the desolate arch of crags overhead, and the winding length of the miner's road below—the narrow miner's tracks made across the fells, the miserable huts, the slatternly women, and the ragged children; they had seen what looked more like ruin and wreckage than the scene of any great industry, and where the wonder was how human beings could exist at all, how they were fed, and what they did after work hours, perched up among the rocks, like so many birds—not quite of heaven. And when they had seen all this they were assumed to understand the mysteries of the lead mines on Haverbrack fells.

When he had finished his part of showman, Ainslie called the captain of the mine, a rough, goodnatured Cornish giant, and had a little private talk with him—the Cornishman grunting and laughing as if mightily amused at what he said. Then he came back smiling; and asked if the

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ladies would like to go down the min?—the gentlemen would of course; but the ladies?

Grace shouted "Yes, for sure!" in her clear voice that "carried" as far as a bird's; but both her father and Mark negatived her at once; and Luke told her peremptorily he would not hear of it—Miss Lorton might do as she liked, but his lass shouldn't go through such a trapse, and she needn't think it—so now!

"Then I suppose you will not go, Miss Lorton?" said Ainslie, turning to Lizzie.

"I certainly will, if you will allow it," she answered.

Whereupon arose a storm of dissuasions, to which she listened quietly enough, but with a certain unmoved doggedness which those who knew her understood: and when there was a pause she said, looking at Ainslie, "If Mr. Forbes says there is no danger, I would like to go. I can trust him, and I would like the fun of it."

"Not a bit of danger!" cried Ainslie. "The captain will look to the ropes and seat. There is not an ounce of danger; else do you think I

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would risk it ? It is only if you care to make yourself such an awful guy as you must?—for you know you must dress to go down. I have provided things for you, but they are not quite the London fashions."

"I don't care—I should like to go," persisted Lizzie.

And Ainslie said, "Well then you shall," quite patronizingly.

She might go down either on the seat or in the bucket, he said; which she preferred: the seat would be best if she was not afraid—but the bucket was the more assuring: which should it be?

"The seat!" said Lizzie.

Far from fearing an apparent, she would have courted a real danger at this moment, if only Ainslie should be by to we how heroically she would bear herself, and to love her for it afterwards.

"You gentlemen will come by the ladders?" then said Ainslie—Mark and Luke assenting. But Ralph, not liking the look of those small steep rungs leading down a round hole into

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darkness and the unknown, declined the expedition altogether; to which Ainslie said, "All right!" in a tone peculiarly contented. And so the party was arranged.

Then Lizzie was taken into one of the huts and dressed. She had a clean length of sacking, which was wound round her as a petticoat; she had a tolerably clean miner's jacket and a cap, both belonging to Ainslie; and a huge pair of his boots, into which she had to thrust her pretty feet, filling up the vacant spaces with straw. She was the oddest-looking object possible when she emerged from the hut; but her queer costume made her face still more beautiful, by the very force of contrast; and Ainslie himself, looking handsomer than ever in his miner's costume, told her in a low voice that she "looked like an angel"—the men giving her a faint cheer as she passed, holding his hand, to the month of the mine.

Here she found a small seat like the seat of a swing, with swinglike ropes going overhead. And on to this Ainslie placed her, while the captain and another man held it up—then fastened her in

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with the ropes, so that she could not possibly fall out; though, should she faint and fall forward, she might get a few ugly knocks and scratches. But she scouted the idea of fainting; and looked down the round dark hole into which she was to be lowered fearlessly. She had but one thought—" I shall be with him there."

After he had secured her on her seat Ainslie left her to the care of the captain; for as he and the other two men were going down by the ladders, they were obliged to have a start, if they were to meet her, as was promised, at the first level. And in the interval of waiting the captain continually exhorted her not to be afraid—which she was not thinking of being—and Ralph was beseeching her to abandon her dangerous design, and to remain with them in safety, before it was too late.

But she laughed at his prayers and his cautions alike; too happy in her excitement to be bored even with his solicitude; though only so short while ago he had irritated her almost beyond bearing with not half his present persistency.

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That headache of hers had gone very suddenly! Even Ralph, not prone to uncomfortable perceptions, could not help thinking how suddenly!

But in the midst of his beseechings, at a certain signal agreed upon, the Cornish captain, crying "Here goes, Missie!" gently pushed her over the month of the shaft; and she was lowered into the abyss, leaving Ralph in an agony above.

It was a wonderful sensation to her as she went slowly down into this dead dark, obliged to push herself away from the rough walls of the shaft when she swung too close, guiding her passage by feet and hands, and getting many a scratch from the sharp points and jagged surfaces of the sides—swinging down into the warm and stifling air, unlike any thing she had ever experienced before. But she enjoyed it thoroughly as a new sensation—the possible peril giving it only a greater zest, and exalting into a danger what was merely a trial of nerves.

Presently she felt her speed gently slacken, while she saw a faint glimmer down below, where Ainslie had stuck his candle in the side; in another instant she had come to the first level, with Ainslie

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standing there to speak a word of comfort and assurance on her way.

"Are you frightened?" he asked tenderly—feeling the ropes to make sure that they were safe.

Her heart was beating fast, but not with fear.

"No," she said in a low voice, "I like it."

"You are a heroine!" he exclaimed, resting his hand on her shoulder. "I like to see you so superior to the silly fears of other girls."

"I am repaid for any thing if you are pleased with me," Lizzie answered fervently, placing her own hand on his still resting on her shoulder. And then, though his was bedaubed with clay and mire, she laid her flushed cheek against it caressingly, lifting her shoulder into the delicious curve of a bit of Greek sculpture. But as Luke and Mark came down the ladders at this moment, looking like glowworms with huge bodies with their lighted ends of candle in their hats, nothing more could be said or done. And after a few seconds of general talk, she was lowered as before.

Her imprudent caress set the blood dancing in Ainslie's veins, and made him like a man intoxicated or half delirious. He forgot all that he had

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resolved—and all that he knew of impossibilities and the future; difference of station, want of fortune, the father's certain opposition, his own uncertain heart—every thing was swept away but the imperious desire to feel that soft warm cheek again—whatever the result. What harm was there in it? Just that once! only to give her back her own caress—only to give her confidence, and not let her feel that she had done wrong in trusting him as she had done—just one kiss down in the dark mine where he was master, and then back to the outer world again and prudence and the strictest formality. That soft warm rounded cheek!—he felt the impress on his hand still! Whatever it cost, he would feel it again, he thought to himself, swinging down the ladders at headlong speed.

When Lizzie stopped again, at the floor of the mine, she found Ainslie alone. He was out of breath with his rapid descent to get in advance of his companions, not so well used to the ladders as himself.

"Ah! there you are!" he said as she was lowered. "Now I have you to myself!"

He spoke with a certain reckless air unusual

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to him—a certain vehemence of accent, like a man sure of his power and determined to use it. Hurriedly, feverishly, he untied the ropes that bound her, and took her by the waist to lift her off her seat. Even through the thick miner's costume her felt the girlish suppleness of her slight figure, and how she bent and swayed towards him. She laid her hands on his shoulders to support herself as he lifted her, but her footing being uncertain, she stumbled and fell against his breast.

His arms were still round her, and when she stumbled he pressed her to him and held her tenderly clasped. The darkness, the vague sense of danger, the strangeness of her circumstances, the absolute solitude for the moment, all overpowered the small amount of prudence and reserve at any time possessing her. Slipping her hands from his shoulders, her arms glided gently round him, while her face was uplifted lovingly to his. They could see each other's eyes—each felt the beating of the other's heart—and Ainslie read, as one reads a poem or scans a picture, the yearning look of love on the fresh young face lifted like a prayer to him—the frank, full, unhesitating love

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of a girl knowing neither evil nor restraint, conscions only of the impulses of her beating heart, and not stopping to calculate results.

"My beautiful Lizzie!" he said in a low voice; then stooped his head and kissed her trembling lips.

"Then you love me!" murmured Lizzie, and sank heavily against his breast, faint, trembling, and giddy.

What more might have been said had this dangerous opportunity continued, no one knows; but at this moment Luke and Mark, suddenly appearing, broke the spell and recalled them both to real life in this so unreal world surrounding them.

"Well, Miss Lizzie," cried Luke as he descended, "and now that you are here, what do you make of it? A nasty dark hole, all puddles and jags, there ain't much to tempt a lady, is there?"

"It is very nice," said Lizzie unconsciously.

Luke burst into a loud laugh.

"Well, that beats all that ever I heard—bangs Banager, as we say on the fells. Nice! I wonder what neat! I say, Forbes, Miss Lizzie says it's

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nice! Can't you make her housekeeper here, or something?"

Lizzie vouchsafed no answer to Luke's rough play, but walked a few steps away; and Ainslie was obliged to go after her, to guide and guard her; for the most part holding her hand, hers clasped nervously against his, while telling her what to avoid, when to stoop, what heap of rubbish to skirt round, and when to be careful of the jutting angles of the rocks.

Lizzie walked as if in an enchanted dream. That damp, dark, dirty mine was like a palace to her; the spangled ore, scarcely to be made out at all by unaccustomed eyes, shone like diamonds in the yellow light of the flickering candles; it was exquisite enjoyment to splash through the pools of muddy water, he holding her hand; or to stoop as she entered the smaller passages, he putting his arm over her to protect her head; when the dank drops fell on her face she laughed as if they had been rose-leaves shaken down by a summer wind; her very dress was like a delicious masquerade, wherein she and her king made pretence to be peasants: the whole thing was the

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Garden of Eden travestied, and Ainslie was the Adam to her Eve.

At every step she had to rely on him, and at every step he assisted her; and each time he grasped her hand more strongly, or took her by the waist, or put his arm about her shoulders—all in needful care of her, unaccustomed and bewildered as she was—Lizzie's heart flowed out to him with still more fervent love, and her passionate intensity grew more intense and impassioned still.

But Ainslie walked in ever increasing trouble at his folly; and before the time came to ascend again, had bitterly repented the false position in which a moment's weakness had placed both himself and her. He knew that he did not really love her; to his own most miserable regret and self-reproach he knew it. She had fascinated and warmed him, and made him forget his good resolutions, his common sense, and even his honour—but this was not love. And yet, God help her! how she loved him!

It was a coil, thought Ainslie, as he bound her again in her seat, and gave the signal to draw her

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up the shaft, without stopping at the levels this time.

When she came up to the outer world again, wet and clay-bedaubed as a real miner, the men above ground gave her a hearty cheer, as they crowded about her with quite enthusiasm; and the captain told her that the new lode should be called after her for the future—at least among themselves—and he was sure it would be a lucky one, and turn out the richest of the lot. Grace shrieked with laughter at the state in which she was; and Ralph was moved almost to tears by his grateful joy to have her restored safe to him once more. While she—she looked as if she had met a god down in that black Eden—a god who had given her love and beauty and immortality, who had raised her to a life higher than the life of earth, and endowed her with a glory beyond her womanhood. As was it not so in truth?

Then she retreated to her hut, and made herself fresh and lovely again in her natural way: but when she was dressed, and had come out expecting to find the men also restored to their natural selves, she found instead that only

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Mark and Luke had just returned;—but not Ainslie.

A murmur was going about among the work-men, who were slowly flocking round the mouth of the shaft; the captain, standing on the board which had borne Lizzie, shouted to some of them to lower him, and look sharp about it; a woman was weeping—it was evident something was wrong.

Where was Ainslie? Paler than one might think a living thing could be—the glory, the radiance of her late divinity deepened into the tragic passion of a great and mighty dread, Lizzie made but one step to where Grace was standing, a few paces behind her father.

"Grace! what is it? Is *he* hurt?" she said in a harsh voice. "Let me go down to him!—tell them to let me go!"

"Hush! Hush! Miss Lizzie; they will see and hear you!" said Grace terrified. "It ain't Mr. Forbes at all; it's that poor body's husband yonder—she who's crying so; and they say he's almost killed, if not quite."

"Thank God!" said Lizzie with a passionate sob; then, going up to the woman, she flung her-

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self on her knees by her, and taking her hand as if she had been her sister, said, with her whole full heart upon her face: "I am so sorry for you!" bursting into a flood of tears as she spoke.

The men all thought her emotion what it seemed to be—a woman's sympathy for a woman's grief, and felt inclined to cheer the beautiful young lady again, because she took the sufferings of one of them to heart like her own; and Ralph blessed her for a true sweet saint and Christian sister, let others say what they liked. She was full of feeling—of rich, generous, loving feeling, and she got misunderstood: but how different even to Grace Hogarth there—good and innocent as she was—standing with her face scarcely a shade paler, and in nowise sadder for this fearful tragedy that had befallen!

And yet in the long period of the poor fellow's sufferings Grace fed him daily from the How, denying herself that his share might be larger, and walking over the fells in all weathers and almost at all hours to take help and comfort to his wife and him. And that too without a lover at the mines, to clothe every living soul

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among them with reflected beauty; and without a pleasant brown-eyed pastor to think her another Elizabeth of Hungary if she only so much as felt compassionately for a sister woman's sorrow.

Soon after this Ainslie, very pale, and with streaks of blood on his face and hands and clothes, came up by the ladders which were at some little distance from the shaft; and then, carefully supported by the Cornish captain, the wounded man was drawn up in the bucket—a crashed and bleeding mass of maimed humanity.

When he was laid in the hut, his wife sitting at his head and rocking herself to and fro, sobbing, and doing nothing else, poor body, Ralph went in to him to offer what help and consolation he could. For Ralph believed in the efficacy of prayer, and took literally the text which removes mountains by faith. If he could not heal by prayer and the laying on of hands like the Apostles of old, it was because he had not their faith he used to say; because he would not open his soul to receive a sufficiently large influx of the Divine Spirit: still, he believed that if he could not do all, he could do something—if he could not remove mountains,

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lie might molehills—if he could not cure, he might help.

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But the wounded man faintly shook his head with the sweet Irish smile that always looks to be such a triumph over circumstances, and lifting up a pair of real dark-blue Irish eyes, frank, loving, and full of humour, said in the broadest brogue that he thanked his honour (he was too loyal to Father Phelim to say "his reverence"); but he was a papist born and bred, and if he was to die, why sure he must have a priest or none at all; and if he was to live, he had the Holy Virgin and the blessed saints to look after him; but he thanked his honour all the same, and would drink his health and long life to him when he got well. And then he smiled again, and fell back upon the rude pillow in a swoon.

More to the purpose, thought the men, Ainslie mounted one of them on his own mare, and sent him off full gallop for Mr. Bird; telling him not to lose a minute on his way, and not to let Mr. Bird lose a minute on the way either: and in the mean time they made the poor fellow as comfortable as they could, and Ainslie himself took charge

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of him and attended to him. In quite a different manner and spirit to that in which he had performed his bit of make-believe heroism when he saved Ralph Wynter at not the smallest risk to himself. Here where the occasion was real, his true self came out, and he was noble without knowing it and without dreaming of display.

He would not go back to the How, he said; he might come in later perhaps, after Mr. Bird had seen poor Pat; but he certainly could not go now. His men were his children, and he was bound to look after them. Indeed, he should have no pleasure were he to leave this poor fellow; so he must decline distinctly with many thanks. He was very sorry—they might be sure of that—with a side glance at Lizzie, standing pale and dumb beside him-but it was useless to try and overpersuade him.

Handsome as he was by form and features, Ainslie had never looked so well as now—when that small disturbing vanity of his was set at rest, and his truer manhood was left free and untroubled in its stead.

Ralph also remained at the mines, thinking

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that he might improve the occasion for the good of those who could be got to attend to him; though his ministrations were not much valued by the men, seeing that half were Irish Catholics to whom he was no priest at all, and the other half Cornish Methodists to whom he was a formalist bound in the bonds of Babylon and ignorant of the treasures of

free grace. But he laboured all the same; and a few among the more thoughtful confessed that his words sounded all right and were comforting.

So then Lizzie went on to the How with Grace and Luke and Mark, unattended by either the man she loved or the man who loved her. But though she was fearfully disappointed, and dull and dispirited, she thought back over all that had happened during the last few days, and comforted herself with believing that surely she should see Ainslie again and soon; when—would they not be formally engaged? What should prevent it? Did they not love each other? why then should they not be engaged, to be married when time and occasion served?

"Why not?" repeated Lizzie to herself, forcibly creating her own security.

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But Ainslie, troubled and conscience stricken at what had happened through his imprudence—too honest to wilfully deceive, if too weak to always resist, and pure-hearted enough to understand and respect the nature which laid itself open to such terrible misapprehension had he been so minded—resolving that no further opportunity for such a dangerous mistake should occur again, kept steadily away from Langthwaite and the Greyrigg road; so that it was long after this before Lizzie saw him again.

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