

for pathetic attitudes, and that her quick-tongue paid them back in their own coin. They bore no malice. Poor people only really respect those who know them as they are, and whose sympathy is personal and not ideal. Lady Sarah's was genuine sympathy; she knew her flock by name, and she spared no trouble to help those who were trying to help themselves. The children would come up shyly when they saw the straight, scant figure coming along, and look into her face. Sometimes the basket would open, and red apples would come out—shining red apples in the dirty little back streets and by-lanes behind Kensington Square. Once Robert Henley, walking to Church House across some back way, came upon his aunt sitting on an old chair on the step of a rag-shop with a little circle of children round her, and Dolly standing beside her, straight and upright, with an apple in her hand. Over her head swung the legless form of a rag doll, twirling in the wind. On one side of the door was some rhymed doggerel about "Come, cookey, come," and bring "your bones" plastered up against the wall. Lady Sarah, on the step, seemed dispensing bounties from her bag to half a dozen little clamorous, half-fledged creatures.

"My dear aunt Sarah, what does this mean?" said Robert, trying to laugh, but looking very uncomfortable.

"I was so tired, Robert, I could not get home without resting," said Lady Sarah; "and Mr. Wilkins kindly brought me out a chair. These are some of my Sunday-school children, and Dolly and I were giving them a treat."

"But really this is scarcely the place to—If any one were to pass—if—Run away! run away! run away!" said Mr. Henley, affably, to the children, who were all closing in in a ragged phalanx, and gazing admiringly at his trowsers. "I'll get you a cab directly," said the young man, looking up and down. "I came this short-cut, but I had no idea—"

"There are no cabs any where down here," said Dolly, laughing. "This is Aunt Sarah's district; that is her soup-kitchen." And Dolly pointed up a dismal street with some flapping washing lines on one side. It looked all empty and deserted, except that two women were standing in the doorways of their queer old huddled-up houses. A little further off came a branch street, a blank wall, and some old Queen Anne railings and doorways leading into Kensington Square.

"Good-by, little Betty," said Lady Sarah, getting up from her old straw chair, and smiling.

She was amused by the young man's unaffected dismay. Philanthropy was quite in Henley's line, but that was, Robert thought, a very different thing from familiarity.

"Now then, Betty, where's your courtesy?" says Dolly; "and Mick, Sir!"

Mick grinned, and pulled at one of his horrible little wisps of hair. The children seemed fascinated by the "gentleman." They were used to the ladies, and, in fact, accustomed to be very rude to Dolly, although she was so severe.

"If you will give me an arm, Robert," said Lady Sarah, "and if you are not ashamed to be seen with me—"

"My dear Lady Sarah!" said Robert, hastily, offering his arm.

"Now, children, be off," says Dolly.

"Please, Sir, won't you give us 'napeny?" said Mick, hopping along with his little deft, bare feet.

"Go away—for shame, Mick!" cried Dolly again, while Henley impatiently threw some coppers into the road, after which all the children set off scrambling in an instant. "Oh, Robert, you shouldn't have done that," cried Dolly, rushing back to superintend the fair division of kicks and halfpence.

Robert waited for her for a moment, and looked at her as she stood, straight and tall in her long gray cloak, with a little struggling heap at her feet of legs and rags and squeaks and contortions. The old Queen Anne railings of the corner house, and the dim street winding into rags, made a background to this picture of modern times: an old slatternly woman in a night-cap came to her help from one of the neighboring doorways, and seizing one of the children out of the heap, gave it a cuff and dragged it away. Dolly had lifted Mick off the back of a smaller child: the crisis was over.

"Here she comes," said Lady Sarah, in no way discomposed.

Robert was extremely discomposed. He hated to see Dolly among such sights and surroundings. He tried to speak calmly as they walked on, but his voice sounded a little cracked.

"Surely," he said, "this is too much for you at times. Do you go very often?"

"Nearly every day, Robert," said Dorothea. "You see what order I have got the children into."

She was laughing again, and Henley, as usual, was serious.

"Of course I can not judge," said he, "not knowing what state they were in originally." Then he added, gravely turning to Lady Sarah, "Don't you somehow think that Dolly is very young to be mixed up with a—rag-shops and wickedness?"

"Dolly is young," said her aunt, not over-pleased; "but she is very prudent, and I am not afraid of her pawning her clothes and taking to drink."

"My dear aunt, you don't suppose I ever thought of such a possibility," Robert exclaimed. "Only ladies do not always consider things from our point of view, and I

feel in a certain degree responsible and bound to you as your nearest male protector. (Take care—here is a step.) I should not like other people, who might not know Dolly as we do, to imagine that she was accustomed already to—"

"My dear Robert," said Lady Sarah, "Dolly has got an aunt and a brother to take care of her. Do you suppose that we would let her do any thing that we thought might hurt her in other people's opinion? Dolly, here is Robert horrified at the examples to which you are exposed. He feels he ought to interfere."

"You won't understand me," said Robert, keeping his temper very good-naturedly. "Of course I can't help taking an interest in my relations."

"Thank you, Robert," said Dolly, smiling and blushing.

Their eyes met for an instant, and Robert looked better pleased. It was a bright delightful spring morning. All the windows were shining in the old Square; there was a holiday thrill in the air, a sound of life, dogs barking, people stirring and coming out of their hiding-places, animals and birds exulting.

Dolly used to get almost tipsy upon sunshine. The weather is as much part of some people's lives as the minor events which happen to them. She walked along by the other two, diverging a little as they traveled along, the elder woman's bent figure beating time with quick, fluttering footsteps to the young man's even stride. Dolly liked Robert to be nice to her aunt, and was not a little pleased when he approved of herself. She was a little afraid of him. She felt that beneath that calm manner there were many secrets that she had not yet fathomed. She knew how good he was, how he never got into debt. Ah me! how she wished George would take pattern by him! Dolly and Rhoda had sometimes talked Robert over. They gave him credit for great experience, a deep knowledge of the world (he dined out continually when he was in town), and they also gave him full credit for his handsome, thoughtful face, his tall, commanding figure. You can not but respect a man of six foot high.

So they reached the doorway at last: the ivy was all glistening in the sunshine; and as they rang the bell they heard the sound of Minette's bark in the garden, and then came some music, some brilliant piano-forte playing, which sounded clear and ringing as it overflowed the garden wall and streamed out into the lane.

"Listen! Who can that be playing?" cries Dolly, brightening up still brighter, and listening with her face against the ivy.

"George," says Robert. "Has George come up again?"

"It's the overture to the 'Freischütz,'" says Dolly, conclusively: "it is George."

And when old Sam shuffled up at last to open the door he announced, grinning, that "Mr. Garge had come, and was playing the peanner in the drawing-room."

At the same moment, through the iron gate, they saw a figure advancing to meet them from the garden, with Gumbo caracoling in advance.

"Why, there is Rhoda in the garden," cries Dolly. "Robert, you go to her. I must go to George."



CHAPTER XV. GEORGE'S TUNES.

THERE is George sitting at the old piano in the drawing-room. The window is wide open. The Venetian glass is dazzling over his head, of which the cauliflower shadow is thrown upon the wall. By daylight the old damask paper looks all stained and discolored, and the draperies hang faintly and turning gray and brown and to all sorts of strange autumnal hues in this bright spring sunshine.

The keys answer to George's vigorous fingers, while the shadow bobs in time from side to side. A pretty little pair of slim gloves and a prayer-book are lying on a chair by the piano; they are certainly not George's, nor Eliza Twells's, who is ostensibly dusting the room, but who has stopped short to listen to the music. It has wandered from the "Freischütz" overture to "Kennst du das Land," which, for the moment, George imagines to be his own composition. How easily the chords fall into their places! how the melody flows loud and clear from his fingers! (It's not only on the piano that

people play tunes which they imagine to be their own.) As for Eliza, she had never heard any thing so beautiful in all her life.

"Can it play hymn toones, Sir?" says she, in a hoarse voice.

Hymn tunes! George goes off into the Hundredth Psalm. The old piano shakes its cranky sides, the pedals groan and creak, the music echoes all round; then another shadow comes floating along the faded wall, two fair arms are round his neck, the music stops for an instant, and Eliza begins to rub up the leg of a table.

"How glad I am you have come! but *why* have you come, George—oughtn't you to be reading?"

"Oh," says George, airily, "I've only come for the day. Look here: have you ever heard this Russian tune? I've been playing it to Miss Parnell; I met her coming from church."

"Miss Parnell? Do you mean Rhoda?" said Dolly, as she sits down in the big chair and takes up the gloves and the prayer-book, which opens wide, and a little bit of fresh-gathered ivy falls out. It is Rhoda's prayer-book, as Dolly knows. She puts back the ivy, while George goes on playing.

"How pretty!" says she, looking at him with her two admiring eyes, and raising her thick brows.

George, much pleased with the compliment, goes on strumming louder than ever.

"Robert is here," says Dolly, still listening. "He is in the garden with Rhoda."

"Oh, is he?" says George, not overpleased.

It was at this moment that Lady Sarah came to the garden window, still in her district equipments. Eliza Twells, much confused by her mistress's appearance, begins to dust wildly; at last, finding that nobody pays any attention to her, she walks out of the room on tiptoe. Outside the door comes a sound of falling broomsticks.

"How d'ye do, George?" said his aunt, coming up to him. "We didn't expect you so soon again."

George offered his cheek to be kissed, and played a few chords with his left hand.

"I hadn't meant to come," he said; "but I was up at the station this morning, seeing a friend off, and as the train was starting I got in. I've got a return ticket."

"Of course you have," said Lady Sarah; "but where will you get a return ticket for the time you are wasting? It is no use attempting to speak to you. Some day you will be sorry;" and then she turned away, and walked off in her gleaming goloshes, and went out at the window again. She did not join Robert and Rhoda, who were pacing round and round the garden walk, but wandered off her own way alone.

"There!" says George, looking up at Dolly for sympathy.

Dolly doesn't answer, but turns very pale, and her heart begins to beat.

"It is one persecution," cries George, speaking for himself, since Dolly won't speak for him. "She seems to think she has a right to insult me—that she has bought it with her hateful money."

He began to crash out some defiant chords upon the piano.

"Don't, dear," said Dolly, putting her hand on his. "You don't know," she said, hesitating, "how bitterly disappointed Aunt Sarah has been when—you have not passed. She is so clever herself. She is so proud of you. She hopes so much."

"Nonsense," said George, hunching up sulkily. "Dolly, you are forever humbugging. You love me, and perhaps others appreciate me a little; but not Aunt Sarah. She don't care that" (a crash) "for me. She thinks that I can bear insult like Robert, or all the rest of them who are after her money-bags."

He was working himself up more and more, as people do who are not sure they are right. He spoke so angrily that Dolly was frightened.

"Oh, George," she said, "how can you say such things! you mustn't, do you hear? not to me—not to yourself. Of course Robert scorns any thing mean as much as you do. Her savings! they all went in that horrid bank. She does not know where to go for money sometimes, and we ought to spare her, and never to forget what we do owe her. She denies herself every day for us. She will scarcely see a doctor when she is ill, or take a carriage when she is tired."

Dolly's heart was beating very quick; she was determined that, come what might, George should hear the truth from her.

"If you are going to lecture me too, I shall go," said George; and he got up and walked away to the open window, and stood grimly looking out. He did not believe Dolly; he could not afford to believe her. He was in trouble; he wanted money himself. He had meant to confide in Dolly; that was one of the reasons why he had come up to town. He should say nothing to her now. She did not deserve his confidence; she did not understand him, and always sided with her aunt. "Look here, I had better give the whole thing up at once," he said, sulkily; "I don't care to be the object of so many sacrifices." As he stood there glowering, he was unconsciously watching the two figures crossing the garden and going toward the pond; one of them, the lady, turned, and seeing him at the window, waved a distant hand in greeting. George's face cleared. He would join Rhoda; it was no use staying here.

As he was leaving the room poor Dolly looked up from the arm-chair in which she had been sitting despondently: she had

tears in her heart, though her eyes were dry: she wanted to make friends. "You know, George," she said, "I *must* say what I think true to you. Aunt Sarah grudges nothing—"

"She makes the very most," says George, stopping short, "of what she does, and so do you;" and he looked away from Dolly's entreating face.

Again poor Dolly's indignation masters her prudence. "How can you be so mean and ungrateful?" she says.

"Ungrateful!" cries George, in a passion. "You get all you like out of Aunt Sarah; to me she doles out hard words and a miserable pittance, and you expect me to be grateful. I can see what Robert and Frank Raban think as well as if they said it."

Dolly sprang past him, and rushed out of the room in tears.

"Dolly! Dolly! forgive me, do forgive me! I'm a brute," says George, running after her: he had really talked on without knowing what he said. "Please stop!"

"Dolly!" cries Lady Sarah, from the breakfast-room.

Dolly went flying along the oak hall and up the old staircase and across the ivy window. She could not speak. She ran up to her room and slammed the door, and burst out sobbing. She did not heed the voices calling then, but in after-days, long, long after, she used to hear them at times, and how plainly they sounded when all was silent—"Dolly! Dolly!" they called. People say that voices travel on through space—they travel on through life and across time: is it not so? Years have passed since they may have been uttered, but do we not hear them again and again, and answer back longing into the past?

Meanwhile poor Dolly banged the door in indignation. She was glad George was sorry, but how dared he suspect her? How dared Mr. Raban—Mr. Raban, who did not pay his debts? What did she care? What did they know? *They* did not understand how she loved her brother in her own way, her very own; loving him and taking care for him and fighting his battles.....

"Oh, George, how cruel you are!" sobbed poor Dolly, sitting on her window-sill. The warm sun was pouring through the open casement, spreading the shadow of the panes and the frame-work upon the carpetless floor; in a corner of the window a little pot of mignonette stood ready to start to life; a bird came with the shadow of its little breast upon the bars, and chirruped a cheerful chirp. Dolly looked up, breathed in the sun and the bird-chirp—how could she help it?—then her wooden clock struck; it distracted her somehow, and her indignation abated: the girl got up, bathed her red eyes, and went to the glass to straighten her crisp locks and limp tucker. "Who is knocking?"

—come in," said Dolly. She did not look round, she was too busy struggling with her laces. Presently she saw a face reflected in the glass beside her own—a pale brown face with black hair and slow, dark eyes and close little red lips.

"Why, Rhoda, have you come for me?" said Dolly, looking round, sighing and soothed.

At the same time a voice from the garden below cried out, "Dolly, come down. Have you forgiven me?"

"Yes, George," said Dolly, looking out from her window.

"Here, let me help you," cried Rhoda. "Dolly, Mr. Robert and your brother sent me to find you."

CHAPTER XVI.

A WALKING PARTY.

THE young people were starting for another walk that afternoon. Rhoda and Dolly were holding up their parasols and their white dresses out of the dust. They were half-way down the sunshiny lane when they met Frank Raban (of whom they had been speaking) coming to call at Church House.

"You had much better come along with us, Frank," said George, who was always delighted to welcome his friends, however soon he might quarrel with them afterward.

"I have an appointment at five o'clock," said Raban, hesitating, and with a glance at Miss Vanborough, who was standing a little apart and watching the people passing up and down the road.

"Five o'clock!" said George; "five o'clock is ever so far away—on board a steamer, somewhere in the Indian Ocean; the passengers are looking over the ship's side at the porpoises. Where is your appointment?"

"Do you know a place called Nightingale Lane?" said Frank.

"I know Nightingale Lane: it is as good a place as any other. Come, we will show you the way;" and, putting his arm through Frank's, George dragged him along.

"I wish George had not asked him," said Robert, in a low voice. "There were several things I wanted to consult you about, Dolly, but I must get a quiet half hour. Not now; at some better opportunity."

"Why, Robert?" said Dolly; "what can you have to say that will take half an hour?" She was, however, much flattered that Robert should wish to consult her, and she walked along brightly.

It was a lovely spring afternoon: people were all out in the open air, dogs were barking, doors closing; the little Quaker children who lived in the house at the corner of the terrace were looking out of window with their prim little bonnets, and Dolly,

who knew them, nodded gayly as she passed. She was quite happy again. Robert had looked at her so kindly! She was in charity with the whole world. She had scarcely had a word of explanation with George, but she had made it up with him in her heart. When he asked her for a second help of cold pie at luncheon, she took it as a sign of forgiveness. They went on now by the brown houses of Phillimore Terrace, until they reached a place where the bricks turn into green leaves, and branches arch overhead, and two long avenues lead from the ancient high-road of the Trinobants all the way to the palatine heights of Campden Hill.

When they were in the avenue the young people went and stood under the shade of a tree. George was leaning against the iron rail that separates the public walk from the park beyond. They were standing with their feet on the turf in a criss-cross of shadow, of twigs, and green blades sprouting between. Beyond the rail the lawns and fields sloped to where the old arcades and the many roofs and turrets of Holland House rose, with their weather-cocks veering upon the sky. Great trees were spreading their shadows upon the grass. Some cows were trailing across the meadow, and from beyond the high walls came the echo of the streets without—a surging sound of voices and wheels, a rising tide of life, of countless feet beating upon the stones. Here, behind the walls, all was sweet and peaceful afternoon, and high overhead hung a pale daylight moon.

"Are not you glad to have seen this pretty view of the old house, Mr. Raban?" said Dolly to Frank, who happened to be standing next to her. "Don't you like old houses?" she added, graciously, in her newfound amenity.

"I don't know," said Frank. "They are too much like coffins, and full of dead men's bones. Modern lath and plaster has the great advantage of being easily swept away with its own generation. These poor old places seem to me all out of place among omnibuses and railway whistles."

"The associations of Holland House must be very interesting," said Robert.

"I hate associations," said Frank, looking hard at Dolly. "To-day is just as good as yesterday."

Dolly looked surprised, then blushed up, when she noticed his earnest gaze.

It is strange enough, after one revelation of a man or woman, to meet with another of the same person at some different time. The same person and not the same. The same voice and face, looking and saying such other things, to which we ourselves respond how differently. Here were Raban and Dolly, who had first met by a grave, now coming together in another world and state, with people laughing and talking;

with motion, with festivity: walking side by side through the early summer streets, where all seemed life, not death; hope and progress, not sorrow and retrospect—for Dolly's heart was full of the wonder of life and of the dazzling present. After that first meeting she had begun to look upon the Raban of to-day as a new person altogether—a person who interested her, though she did not like him. Even Dorothea in her softest moods seemed scarcely to thaw poor Frank. When he met her, his old, sad, desperate self used to rise like a phantom between them—no wonder he was cold and silent and abrupt. He could talk to others—to Rhoda, who wore his poor wife's shining cross, and had stood by her coffin, as he thought, and who now met him with looks of sympathy, and who seemed to have forgotten the past. To Miss Vanborough he rarely spoke; he barely answered her if she spoke to him; and yet I don't think there was a word or look of Dolly's that Raban ever forgot. All her poor little faults he remembered afterward; her impatient ways and imperious gestures, her hasty impulse and her innocent severity. What strange debtor-and-creditor account was this between them?

There are some people we only seem to love all the more because they belong to past sorrow. Perhaps it is that they are of the guild of those who are initiated into the sad secrets of life. Others bring back the pain without its consolation; and so Dolly, who was connected with the tragedy of poor Frank Raban's life, frightened him. When, as now, he thought he had seen a remembering look in her eyes, the whole unforgettable past would come before him with cruel vividness. She seemed to him like one of the avenging angels with the flaming swords, ready to strike. Little he knew her! The poor angel might lift the heavy sword, but it would be with a trembling hand. She might remember, but it was as a child remembers—with awe, but without judgment. The little girl he had known had pinned up her locks in great brown loops; her short skirts now fell in voluminous folds; she was a whole head taller, and nearly seventeen: but, if the truth were told, I do not think that any other particular change had come to her, so peaceful had been her experience. Frank was far more changed. He had fought a hard fight with himself since that terrible day he had sat under the arch in the twilight. He had conquered Peace in some degree, and now already he felt it was no longer peace that he wanted, but more trouble. Already, in his heart, he rebelled at the semi-claustration of the tranquil refuge he had found, where the ivy buttresses and scrolled iron gateways seemed to shut out wider horizons. But hitherto work was what he wanted, not

liberty. He had made debts and difficulties for himself during that wild, foolish time at Paris! These very debts and difficulties were his best friends now, and kept him steady to his task. He accepted the yoke, thankful for an honest means of livelihood. He took the first chance that offered, and he put a shoulder to the old pulley at which he had tugged as a boy with a dream of something beyond, and at which he labored as a man with some sense of duty done. He went on in a dogged, hopeless way from day to day. He is a man of little faith, and yet of tender heart.

Some one says that the world is a mirror that reflects the faces that we bring to its surface. Frank's skepticisms met him at every turn. He even judged his own ideal; and as he could not but think of Dolly every hour of the day, he doubted her unceasingly. There seemed scarcely a responsive chord left to him with which to vibrate to the song of those about him. Until he believed in himself again he could not heartily believe in others.

Others, meanwhile, were happily not silent because of his reserve, and were chattering and laughing gayly. Rhoda was sitting on the shady corner of a bench, George was swinging his legs on the railing. Dolly did not sit down. She was not tired; she was in high spirits. By degrees she seemed to absorb all her companions' life and brightness. So Raban thought as he glanced from Rhoda's pale face to Miss Vanborough's beaming countenance. Dolly's brown hair was waving in a pretty drift; her violet ribbons seemed to make her gray eyes look violet. She had a long neck, a long chin; her white ample skirt almost hid Rhoda as she sat in her corner. The girl shifted gently from her seat, and slid away when Dolly—Dolly sobering down—began to tell some of Lady Sarah's stories of Holland House and its inmates.

"There was beautiful Lady Diana Rich," said Dorothea, pointing with her gloved hand.

"Don't say Diana," cries George; "say Diana."

"She was walking in the Park," continues his sister, unheeding the interruption, "when she met a lady coming from behind a tree dressed, as she was herself, in a habit. Then she recognized herself," Dolly said, slowly, opening her gray eyes; "and she went home, and she died within a—"

Dolly, hearing a rustle, looked over her shoulder, and her sentence broke down. A white figure was coming from behind the great stem of the elm-tree near which they were standing. In a moment Dolly recovered herself and began to laugh.

"Rhoda!" she said. "I did not know you had moved. I thought you were my fetch."

"No; I'm myself, and I don't like ghost stories," said Rhoda, in her shrill voice. "They frighten me so, though I don't believe a word of them. Do you, Mr. Raban?"

"Not believe!" cries George, putting himself in between Frank and Rhoda. "Don't you believe in the White Lady of Holland House? She flits through the rooms once a year all in white satin, on the day of her husband's execution. They cut off his head in a silver night-cap, and she can't rest in her grave when she thinks of it."

"Poor ghost!" said Dolly. "I'm so sorry for ghosts! I sometimes think I know some live ones," the girl added, looking at Frank unconsciously, and with more softness than he had believed her capable of. "So she thinks me a ghost," thought Frank, not overpleased.

"The first Lord Holland was a Rich," said Henley, tapping with his cane upon the iron bars. "He must have been the father of Lady Diana. He married a Cope. The Copes built the house, you know. I believe Aubrey de Vere was the original possessor of the property. It then passed to the monks of Abingdon."

"What a fund of information!" said George, laughing. "Raban is immensely impressed."

Raban could not help smiling; but Dolly interposed. She saw that her cousin was only half pleased by the levity with which his remarks were received. "What had Lord Holland done?" she asked.

"He betrayed every body," said Robert; "first one side, then another. He earned his fate—he was utterly unreliable and inconsistent."

"How can an honest man be any thing else?" cried George, with his usual snort, rushing to battle. "No honest men are consistent. Take Sir Robert Peel, take Oliver Cromwell. Lord Holland joined the Commonwealth, and then gave his head to save the king's. It was gloriously inconsistent."

"For my part," Robert answered, with some asperity, "I must confess that I greatly dislike such impulsive characters. They are utterly unscrupulous—"

"Some consciences might have been more scrupulously consistent than Lord Holland's, and kept their heads upon their shoulders," said Raban, dryly.

Dolly wondered what he meant, and whether he was serious. He spoke so shortly that she did not always understand him.

"I am sure I shall often change my mind," she said, to her cousin.

"You are a woman, you know," answered Henley, mollified by her sweet looks.

"And women need not trouble themselves about their motives?" said Frank, speaking in his most sententious way, and ignoring Henley altogether.

"Their motives don't concern any body

but themselves," cried Dolly, rather offended by Frank's manner. He seemed to look upon her as some naughty child, to be constantly reprov'd and put down. He was not half so kind to her as he was to Rhoda, whom he was now helping on with a shawl. Why did he dislike her? Dolly wondered. She couldn't understand any body disliking her. Perhaps it says well for human nature, on the whole, that people are so surprised to find themselves odious to others.

Just then some church-bell began to ring for evening service. Five o'clock had come to Kensington, and George proposed that they should walk on with Raban to the house in Nightingale Lane.

"This way, Rhoda," he said; "are you tired? Take my arm."

Rhoda, however, preferred tripping by Dolly's side.

A painter lived in the house to which Raban was going. It stood, as he said, in Nightingale Lane, within garden walls. It looked like a farm-house, with its many tiles and chimneys, standing in the sweet old garden fringed with rose-bushes. There were poplar-trees and snow-ball-trees, and May-flowers in their season, and lilies of the valley growing in the shade. The lawn was dappled with many shadows of sweet things. From the thatched porch you could hear the rural clucking of poultry and the lowing of cattle, and see the sloping roof of a farm-house beyond the elms. Henley did not want to come in; but Dolly and Rhoda had cried out that it was a dear old garden, and had come up to the very door, smiling and willfully advancing as they looked about them.

The old house—we all know our way thither—has stood for many a year, and seen many a change, and sheltered many an honored head. One can fancy Addison wandering in the lanes round about, and listening to the nightingale "with a much better voice than Mrs. Tofts, and something of Italian manners in her diversions;" or Newton, an old man with faded blue eyes, passing by on his way from Pitt House, hard by. Gentle Mrs. Opie used to stay here, and ugly Wilkes to come striding up the lane in the days of Fox and Pitt and fiery periwigs. Into one of the old raftered rooms poor Lord Camelford was carried to die, when he fell in his fatal duel with Mr. Best in the meadows hard by. Perhaps Sir Joshua may have sometimes walked across from Holland House, five minutes off, where he was a hundred years ago painting two beautiful young ladies. Only yesterday I saw them; one leaned from a window in the wall, the other stood without, holding a dove in her extended hand; a boy was by her side. Those ladies have left the window long since; but others not less beautiful still come up Nightingale Lane to visit the Sir

Joshua of our own time in his studios built against the hospitable house. My heroine comes perforce, and looks at the old gables and elm-trees, and stands under the rustic porch. Robert was seriously distressed.

"Do come away," said he; "suppose some one were to see us."

Rhoda, with a little laugh, ran down one of the garden walks, and George went after her. Dolly stood leaning up against the doorway. She paid no attention to Robert's remonstrance, and was listening, with upraised eyes, to the bird up in the tree. Frank's hand was on the bell, when, as Robert predicted, the door suddenly opened wide. A servant carrying papers and parcels came out, followed by a lady in a flowing silk dress, with a lace hood upon her head, and by a stately-looking gentleman in a long gray coat; erect, and with silver hair and a noble and benevolent head.

"Why is not the carriage come up?" said the lady to the servant, who set off immediately running with his parcels in his arms; then seeing Dolly, who was standing blushing and confused by the open door, she said, kindly, "Have you come to see the studios?"

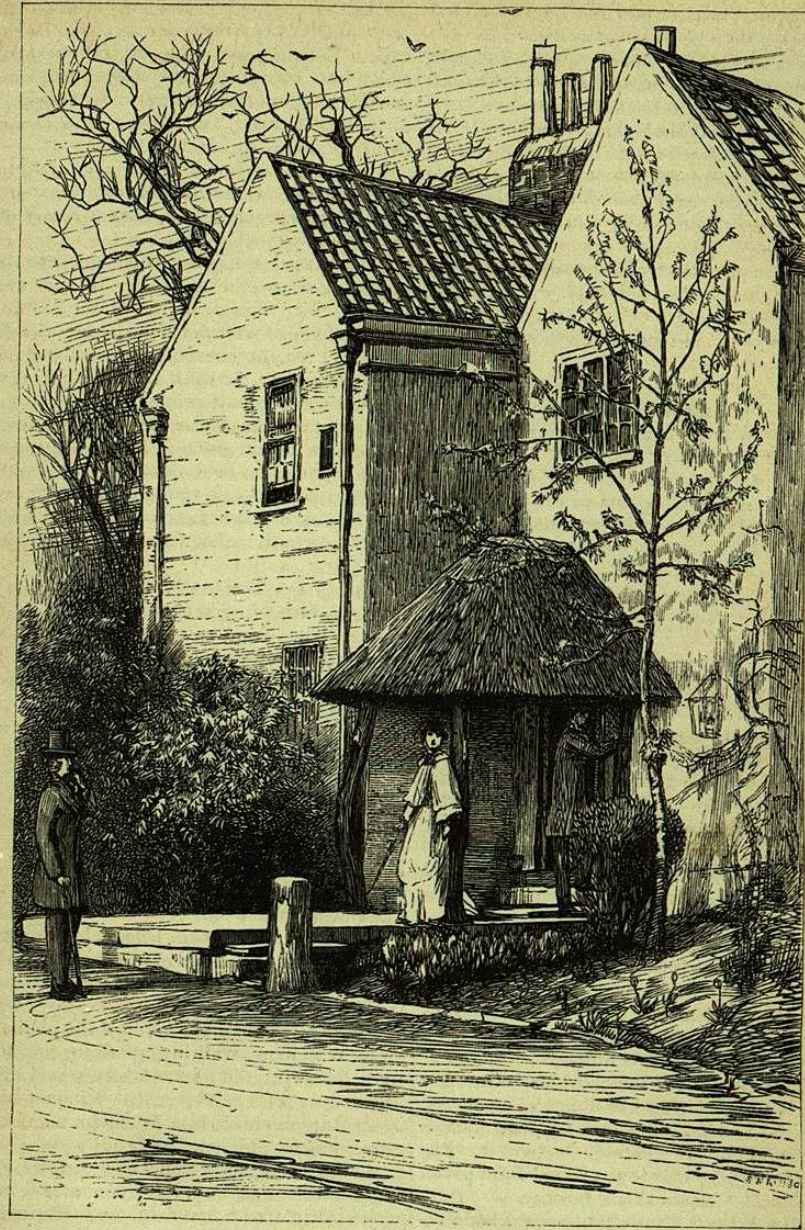
"No," said Dolly, turning pinker still; "it was only the garden; it looked so pretty we came to the door with Mr. Raban."

"I had an appointment with Mr. Royal," said Raban, also shyly, "and my friends kindly showed me the way."

"Why don't you take your friends up to see the pictures?" said the gentleman. "Go up all of you, now that you are here."

"My servant shall show you the way," said the lady, with a smile; and as the servant came back, followed by a carriage, she gave him a few parting directions. Then the Councilor and the lady drove off to the India Office as hard as the horses could go.

It was a white-letter day with Dolly. She followed the servant up an oak passage, and by a long wall, where flying figures were painted. The servant opened a side-door into a room with a great window, and my heroine found herself in better company than she had ever been in in all her life before. Two visitors were already in the studio. One was a lady with a pale and gentle face—Dolly remembered it long afterward when they met again; but just then she only thought of the pictures that were crowding upon the walls sumptuous and silent—the men and women of our time, who seem already to belong to the future, as one looks at the solemn eyes watching from the canvas. Sweet women's faces lighted with some spiritual grace, poets, soldiers, rulers, and wind-bags, side by side, each telling their story in a well-known name. There were children too, smiling, and sketches half done growing from the canvas, and here and there a dream made into a vision, of



UNDER THE RUSTIC PORCH.

Justice or of Oblivion. Of Silence, and lo! Titans from their everlasting hills lie watching the mists of life; or infinite Peace, behold, an Angel of Death is waiting against a solemn disk. Dolly felt as though she had come with Christian to some mystical house along the way. For some minutes past she had been gazing at the solemn Angel—she was absorbed, she could not take her eyes away. She did not know that the painter had come in and was standing near her.

"Do you know what that is?" said he, coming up to her.

"Yes," answered Dolly, in a low voice; "I have only once seen death. I think this must be it; only it is not terrible, as I thought."

"I did not mean to make it terrible," the painter said, struck by her passing likeness to the face at which she was gazing so steadfastly.

Raban also noticed the gentle and power-

ful look, and in that moment he understood her better than he had ever done before; his mistrust was stilled, his load was lightened, and he felt as if a sudden ray of faith and love had fallen into his dark heart.

Before they left Mr. Royal introduced Dolly to the two ladies who were in the studio. She met them again long afterward, and remembered the pale, eager face of one of them.

All the way home Dolly was talking of the pictures.

"I saw a great many likenesses which were really admirable," said Robert. "I have met several of the people out at dinner."

Rhoda could not say a single word about the pictures.

"Why, what were you about?" said Dolly, after she had mentioned two or three one after another. "You don't seem to have looked at any thing."

"You didn't come into the back-room, Dolly. I had an excellent cup of tea there," said George; "that kind lady had it sent up for us."

CHAPTER XVII.

"INNER LIFE."

THE next time Raban came to town he called again at Church House. Then he began to go to John Morgan's, whom he had known and neglected for years. He was specially kind to Rhoda, and gentle in his manner when he spoke to her. Cassie, who had experience, used to joke her about her admirer. Not unfrequently Dolly would be in Old Street during that summer, and the deeply interested recipient of the girls' confidences.

"Cassie, do you really mean that he has fallen in love with Rhoda?" said Dolly. "Indeed, he is not half good enough for her." But all the same, the thought of his admiration for her friend somewhat softened Dolly's feelings toward Raban.

Rhoda herself was mysterious. One day she gave up wearing her diamond cross, and appeared instead with a pretty pearl locket. She would not say where she had got it. Zoe said it was like Cassie's. "Had John given it to her?" Rhoda shook her head.

Dolly did not like it, and took Rhoda seriously to task. "Rhoda, how silly to make a mystery about nothing!" Rhoda laughed.

Except for occasional troubles about George, things were going well at Church House that autumn. Raban sent a warning letter once, which made Dolly very angry. The Admiral talked of coming home in the following spring. Dolly's heart beat at the thought of her mother's return. But meanwhile she was very happy. Robert used to come not unfrequently. Rhoda liked coming when he was there. They would all go out, when dinner was over, and sit upon

the terrace and watch the sun setting calmly behind the medlar-tree and the old beech walk. Kensington has special tranquil hours of its own, happy jumbles of old bricks and sunset. The pigeons would come from next door with a whirl, and with round breasts shining in the light; the ivy leaves stood out green and crisp; the birds went flying overhead and circling in their evening dance. Three together, then two, then a lonely one in pursuit.

Dolly stood watching them one evening in the autumn of that year, while her aunt and Henley were talking. John Morgan, who had come to fetch Rhoda home, was discoursing too, in cheerful tones, about the voice of nature, I think it was. "You do not make enough allowance for the voice of nature," the curate was saying. "You can not blame a man because he is natural, because his impulse cries out against rules and restrictions." As he spoke a bell in the ivy wall began to jangle from outside, and Dolly and Rhoda both looked up curiously, wondering who it could be.

"Rules are absolutely necessary restrictions," said Henley, stirring his coffee: "we are lost if we trust to our impulses. What are our bodies but concrete rules?"

"I wonder if it could be George?" interrupted Dolly.

"Oh no," said Rhoda, quickly, "because—" Then she stopped short.

"Because what, Rhoda?" said Lady Sarah, looking at her curiously. The girl blushed up, and seemed embarrassed, and began pulling the ribbon and the cross round her neck. It had come out again the last few days.

"Have you heard any thing of George?" Lady Sarah went on.

"How should I?" said Rhoda, looking up; then she turned a little pale, then she blushed again. "Dolly, look," she said, "who is it?"

It was Mr. Raban, the giver of the diamond cross, who came walking up along the side-path, following old Sam. There was a little scrunching of chair-legs to welcome him. John Morgan shook him by the hand. Lady Sarah looked pleased.

"This was kind of you," she said.

Raban looked shy. "I am afraid you won't think so," he said. "I wanted a few minutes' conversation with you."

Rhoda opened her wide brown eyes. Henley, who had said a stiff "How-dy-do?" and wished to go on with the conversation, now addressed himself to Dolly:

"I always doubt the fact when people say that impulse is the voice of one's inner life. I consider that principle should be its real interpretation."

Nobody exactly understood what he meant, nor did he himself, if the truth were to be told; but the sentence had occurred to him.

"An inner life," said Dolly, presently, look-

ing at the birds. "I wonder what it means? I don't think I have got one."

"No, Dolly," said Lady Sarah, kindly; "it is very often only another name for remorse. Not yet, my dear—that has not reached you yet."

"An inner life," repeated Rhoda, standing by. "Doesn't it mean all those things you don't talk about—religion and principles?" she said, faltering a little, with a shy glance at Frank Raban. Henley had just finished his coffee, and heard her approvingly. He was going again to enforce the remark, when Dolly, as usual, interrupted him.

"But there is *nothing* one doesn't talk about," said the Dolly of those days, standing on the garden step, with all her pretty loops of brown hair against the sun.

"I wish you would preach a sermon, Mr. Morgan, and tell people to take care of their outer lives," said Lady Sarah, over her coffee-pot, "and keep *them* in order while they have them, and leave their souls to take care of themselves. We have all read of the figs and the thistles. Let us cultivate figs; that is the best thing we can do."

"Dear Aunt Sarah," said Dolly, prettily, and looking up suddenly and blushing, "here we all are sitting under your fig-tree."

Dolly having given vent to her feelings suddenly blushed up. All their eyes seemed to be fixed upon her. What business had Mr. Raban to look at her so gravely?

"I wonder if the cocks and hens are gone to roost?" said my heroine, confused; and, jumping down from the step, she left the coffee-drinkers to finish their coffee.

Lady Sarah had no great taste for art or for *bric-à-brac*. Mr. Francis had been a collector, and from him she had inherited her blue china, but she did not care at all for it. She had one fancy, however—a poultry fancy—which harmlessly distracted many of her spare hours. With a cheerful cluck, a pluming, a spreading out of glistening feathers, a strutting and champing, Lady Sarah's cocks and hens used to awake betimes in the early morning. The cocks would chant matutinal hymns, to the annoyance of the neighborhood, while the hens clucked a cheerful accompaniment to the strains. The silver trumpets themselves would not have sounded pleasanter to Lady Sarah's ears than this crowing noise of her favorites. She had a little temple erected for this choir. It was a sort of pantheon, where all parts of the world were represented, divided off by various latitudinal wires. There were *crève-cœurs* from the Pyrenees, with their crimson crests and robes of black satin; there were magi from Persia, puffy, wind-blown, silent, and somewhat melancholy; there were Polish warriors, gallant and splendid, with an air of misfortune so courageously surmounted that fortune itself would have looked small beside it. Then came the

Dorkings, feathery and speckly, with ample wings outstretched, clucking commonplace English to one another.

To-night, however, the clarions were silent, the warriors were sleepy, the cocks and hens were settling themselves comfortably in quaint fluffy heaps upon their roosts, with their portable feather-beds shaken out, and their bills snugly tucked into the down.

Dolly was standing admiring their strength of mind in retiring by broad daylight from the nice cheerful world into the dismal darkened bed-chamber they occupied. As Dolly stood outside in the sunset, peeping into the dark roosting-place, she heard voices coming along the path, and Lady Sarah speaking in a very agitated voice.

"Cruel boy," she said, "what have I done, what have I left undone, that he should treat me so ill?"

They were close to Dolly, who started away from the hen-house, and ran up to meet her aunt with a sudden movement.

"What is it? Why is he—*Who* is cruel?" said Dolly, and she turned a quick, reproachful look upon Raban. What had he been saying?

"I meant to spare you, my dear," said Lady Sarah, trembling very much, and putting her hand upon Dolly's shoulder. "I have no good news for you; but sooner or later you must know it. Your brother has been behaving as badly as possible. He has put his name to some bills. Mr. Raban heard of it by chance. Wretched boy! he might be arrested. It is hard upon me, and cruel of George."

They were standing near the hen-house still, and a hen woke up from her dreams with a sleepy cluck. Lady Sarah was speaking passionately and vehemently, as she did when she was excited; Raban was standing a little apart in the shadow.

Dolly listened with a hanging head. She could say nothing. It all seemed to choke her; she let her aunt Sarah walk on—she stood quite still, thinking it over. Then came a gleam of hope. She felt as if Frank Raban must be answerable somehow for George's misdemeanors. Was it all true? she began to wonder. Mr. Raban, dismal man that he was, delighted in warnings and croakings. Then Dolly raised her head, and found that the dismal man had come back, and was standing beside her. He looked so humble and sorry that she felt he must be to blame.

"What have you been telling Aunt Sarah?" said Dolly, quite fiercely. "Why have you made her so angry with my brother?"

"I am afraid it is your brother himself who has made her angry," said Raban. "I needn't tell you that I am very sorry," he added, looking very pale; "I would do any