

not nervously confident, as they would all have her be. It was a crumbling, sweet, sunshiny sort of waking dream. Some gleams had broken through the clouds, and shone reflected from the many lattice windows round about the little court. She heard some voices, and some young men hurried by, laughing as they went. They did not see the young lady with the sweet, sad face standing under the gallery. Chrysanthemums were growing up against the wall, with faint lilac and golden heads, the last bright tints left upon the once gorgeous palette of summer. A delicate cool sky hung overhead, and the light was becoming brighter. Dolly passed an open door, and peeped in from the quaint gallery to a warm and darkened room, paneled and carpeted. It was dark and untenanted; a fire was burning in the grate.

"That is Fieldbrook's room; he will give us some tea presently," said Robert, coming up; "but now we can get into George's."

Robert, who seemed to have keys for every key-hole, opened an oak door, and led the way up some stone steps. George's room was on the first floor. Henley went in first, opened the window, dragged forward a chair. "If you will rest here," he said, "I will go and find Fieldbrook. They tell me he last heard from George. I have to speak to the Vice-Chancellor too." Then he was gone again, after looking about to see that there was nothing he could do for her.

Dolly was glad to be alone. She sat down in George's three-sided chair, resting her head upon her hand. She was in his room. Every thing in the place seemed to have a voice, and to speak to her: "George, George," it all said. She looked out of the little window across the court. She could see the old windows of the library shining, and then she heard more voices, and more young men hurried by, with many footsteps.

Ever after Dolly remembered that last half hour spent in George's rooms with George: so it seemed to her, looking back from a time when she had ceased to hope. She went to the writing-table, and mechanically began to straighten the toys and pens lying on the cloth. There was the little dagger his mother had sent him from India years before; the desk she had given him out of her savings; and it occurred to her to open the lid, of which she knew the trick. She pushed the spring, and the top flew up with a sudden jerk, as it always did. Then Dolly saw that the box was full of papers, hastily thrown in, verses, notes of lectures, and a letter torn through. "Dearest Rh—" it began; and there was a blue paper, not unlike one of Aunt Sarah's, sealed. She had no great shame looking over George's papers; a tear fell on the dear heap as she bent over the signs and ink-marks that told of her poor boy's trouble. What was this? A letter,

stamped, and addressed to herself. Had it been thrown in with the rest by mistake? She tore it open hastily, with eager hands. He must have written the night of their water-party. It had no date.

"DEAREST DOLLY" (said the crooked lines),—"This is one more good-by, and one more service that I want you to do me: and you have never grudged any human being love or help. I am going, and before I go I shall make my will, and I shall leave what little I have—not to you—but to Rhoda; and will you see to this? Hers is but a frail measure of strength to struggle for a living. I sometimes think she has not even a heart to help her through life: she will like my money better than me. It is quite late at night, but I can not sleep; she comes and awakens me in my dreams. I shall go away from this as soon as the gates are open. It is no use struggling against my fate. Others are giving their lives for a purpose, and I shall join them if I can. I have been flung from my anchor here, and the waves seem to close over me. If I live you will hear from me. Dearest old Dolly, take warning by me, and don't expect too much. God bless you."

"G. V.
"Will you pay Miller at the boat-house £2 10s. I owe him. I think I have cleared up all other scores. I will leave the papers with him. I shall not come back here any more."

That was all. She was standing with her letter still in her hand, blankly looking at it, when the door opened and Tom Morgan came in. "If I live! What did he mean? 'Ask at the boat-house?'" She laid the letter down and went on turning over the papers without noticing the young man.

Tom walked in with a broad grin and great volubility. "Well," said he, cheerfully, "I thought it was you. I was walking with Magniac and some others, and noticed the windows open, and I saw you standing just where you are now, and I said to Magniac, 'I know that lady.' He wouldn't believe me; but I was right—knew I was. How are you, and how is Lady Sarah? Where's George? When did he come back?" Then suddenly remembering some rumor to which he had paid but little heed at first, "Nothing wrong, I hope?" said Tom.

"Tom! where is this?" said Dolly, without any preamble, in her old abrupt way; and she gave him a crumpled bill which she had been examining:

"MR. VANBROUGH TO J. MILLER—
"To hier of the *Wave* twelve hours.
To man's time, etc., etc.
To new coteing hir with tare, etc."

"I want to go there," she said. "Will you show me the way?"

"To the boat-house?" said Tom, doubtfully, looking at the bill. "Miller's, you mean?"

She saw him hesitate.

"I must go," she cried. "You must take me. Is it Miller's? Show me the way, Tom."

"Of course I can show you the way if you wish it," said Tom.

He looked even more stupid than usual, but he did not like to refuse. He had to be in Hall by three o'clock; that was why he

had hesitated. He had been thinking of his dinner; but Dolly began to tie on her bonnet. She hurried out and ran down stairs, and he followed her across the court into the street. He was not loath to be seen walking with so pretty a young lady. He nodded to several of his friends with velvet bands upon their gowns. A professor went by; Tom raised his well-worn cap.

Dolly might have been amused, at any other time, by the quaint medieval ways of the old place.

It was out of term time, but there had been some special meeting of the college magnates. Crimson coats and black, square caps and tassels and quaint old things were passing. The fifteenth century was standing at a street corner. To-day heartily shook hands with 1450 and hurried on. Dolly saw it all without seeing it. Tom Morgan tried to give her the latest news.

"That is Brown," said he, "the new Professor of Modern Literature." Dolly never even turned her head to look after Brown.

"There's Smith," said Tom; "they say he will be in the first six for the Mathematical Tripos."

Then they came out of the busy High Street by a narrow lane with brick walls on either side. It led to the mill by the river, and beyond the river spread a great country of water-meadows. It was a world, not of to-day or of 1500, but of all time and all hours. Pollards were growing at intervals; the river flowed by, dull and sluggish; the land, too, seemed to flow dull and sluggish to meet a gray horizon. There were no animals to be seen—only these pollard-trees at intervals, and the spires of Cambridge crowding in the mist.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE POLLARD-TREES.

MISS VANBROUGH walked on; she seemed to know the way by some instinct. Sometimes she looked at the water, but it gave her a sort of vertigo. Tom looked at Dolly with some admiration as she passed along the bank, with her clear-cut face and stately figure, following the narrow pathway. They came at last to a bend of the river where some boats were lying high and dry in the grass, and where a little boat-house stood upon a sort of jutting-out island among tall trees upspringing suddenly in the waste. Tall sycamore, ivy-grown stumps, greens of every autumnal shade, golden leaves dropping in lazy showers on the grass or drifting into the sluggish stream, along which they floated back to Cambridge once more. It was a deserted-looking grove, melancholy and romantic. But few people came there. But there was a ferry-man and a black boat-

house, and a flat ferry-boat anchored to the shore. Some bird gave a cry and flew past, otherwise the place was still with that peculiar river silence of tall weeds straggling, of trees drooping their green branches, of water lapping on the brink.

"Is this the place you wanted?" said Tom; "or was it the other boat-house, after all?"

Dolly walked on without answering him. She beckoned to the boatman; and then, as he came toward her, her heart began to beat so that she could scarcely speak or ask the question that she had in her mind to ask. "Has my brother been here? Where is his letter? Is the *Wave* safe in your little boat-house?" This was what she would have said, only she could not speak. Some strange fever had possessed her and brought her so far: now her strength and courage suddenly forsook her, and she stopped short, and stood holding to an old rotten post that stood by the river-side.

"Take care," said Tom; "that ain't safe. You might fall in, and the river is deep just here."

She turned such a pale face to him that the young man suddenly began to wonder if there was more in it all than he had imagined.

"It's perfectly safe, I mean," he said. "Why, you don't mean to say—"

He turned red; he wished with all his heart that he had never brought her there—that he could jump into the river—that he had staid to dine in Hall. To his unspeakable relief unexpected help appeared.

"Why, there is Mr. Raban," said Tom, as Raban came out of the boat-house and walked across under the trees to meet them.

Dolly waited for the two men to come up to her, as she stood by her stump among the willow-trees. Raban did not seem surprised to see her. He took no notice of Tom, but he walked straight up to Dolly.

"You have come," he said; "I had just sent you a telegraphic message."

His manner was so kind and so gentle that it frightened her more than if he had spoken with his usual coldness.

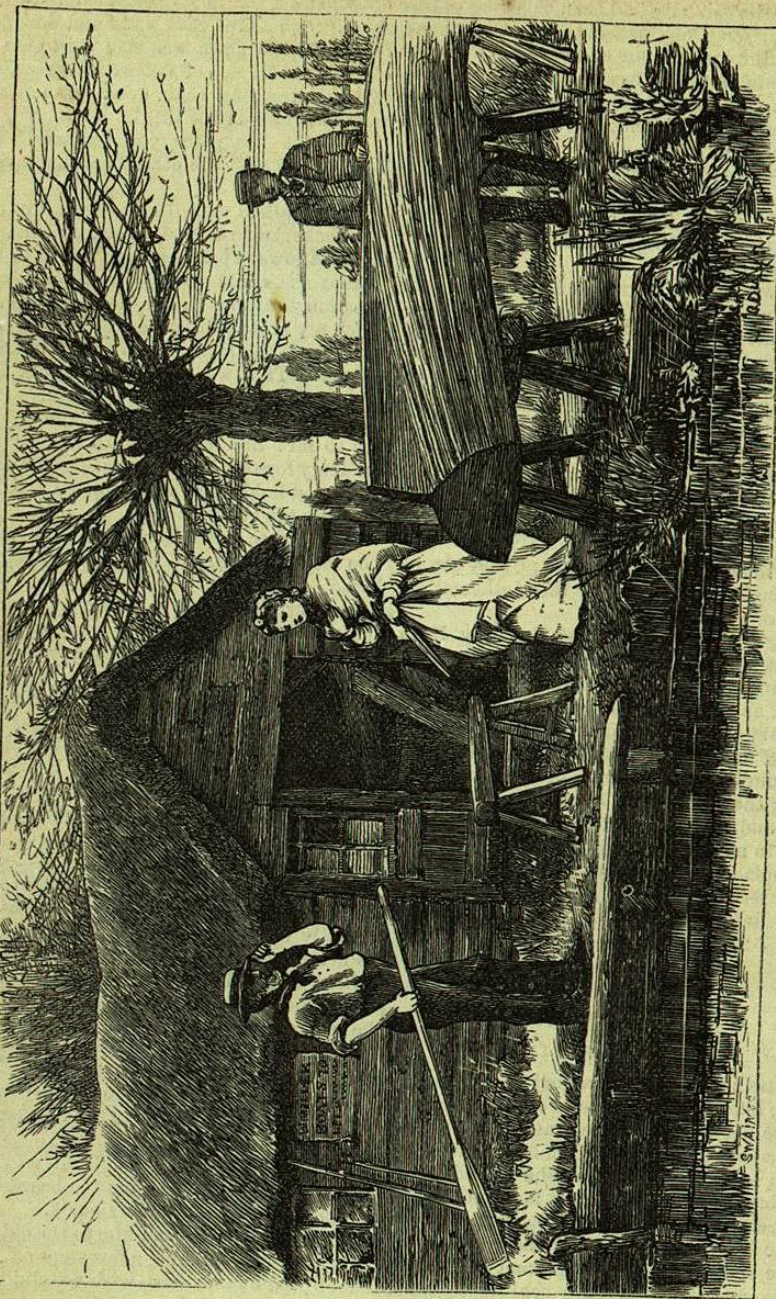
"What is it?" she said, "and why have you come here? Have you too heard—"

She scanned his face anxiously.

Then she looked from him to the old boatman, who was standing a few steps off, in his shabby red flannel shirt, with a stolid brown face and white hair—a not unpicturesque figure standing by the edge of the stream. Winds and rain and long seasons had washed all expression out of old Miller's bronzed face.

"George came here on Tuesday," said Raban to Dolly. "I only heard of it this morning. Miller tells me he gave him a letter or a paper to keep."

"I know it," said Dolly, turning to the old boatman; "I am Mr. Vanborough's sister; I



have come for the letter," she said, quickly, and she held out her hand.

"This gentleman come and asked me for the paper," said the old man, solemnly, "and he stands by to contradict me if I speak false; but if the right party as was expected to call should wish for to see it, my wish is to give satisfaction all round," said the old man. "I knows your brother well, miss, and he know me, and my man too, for

as steady a young man and all one could wish to see. The gentleman come up quite hearty one morning, and ask Bill and me as a favor to hisself to sign the contents of the paper; and he seal it up, and it is safe, as you see, with the seal compact;" and then from his pockets came poor George's packet, a thin blue paper folded over, and sealed with his ring. "Mr. Vanbug he owe me two pound twelve and sixpence," old Miller went

on, still grasping his paper as if loath to give it up, "and he said as how you would pay the money, miss."

Dolly's hands were fumbling at her purse in a moment.

"I don't want nothing for my trouble," said the old fellow. "I knows Mr. Vanbug well, and I thank you, miss, and you will find it all as the gentleman wished, and good-morning," said old Miller, trudging hastily away, for a passenger had hailed him from the opposite shore.

"I know what it is," said Dolly. "See, he has written my name upon it, Mr. Raban; it is his will. He told me to come here. He is gone. I found his letter." She began to quiver. "I don't know what he means."

"Don't be frightened," said Raban, smiling, and very kindly. "He was seen at Southampton, quite well and in good spirits. He has enlisted. That is what he means. You have interest; we must get him a commission; and if this makes him more happy it is surely for the best."

"Perhaps you are right," she said, struggling not to cry. "How did you hear? How kind you have been! How shall we ever thank you?" Her color was coming and going.

"It was a mere chance," Raban said. (It was one of those chances that come to people who have been working unremittingly to bring a certain result to pass.) "Don't thank me," he continued, in a low voice; "you have never understood how glad I am to be allowed to feel myself your friend sometimes."

Raban might have said more, but he looked up and saw Robert's black face frowning down upon them. Robert was the passenger who had hailed old Miller. For an instant Frank had forgotten that Robert existed. He turned away hastily, and went and stared into the water at a weed floating by. The old boatman, waiting by the punt, sat on the edge of the shore watching the little scene, and wondering what the pretty lady's tears might be about. Tom also assisted, open-mouthed—the Morgan family were not used to tears. Mrs. Morgan never cried, not even when Tom broke his leg upon the ice.

Robert was greatly annoyed. He had come all the way along the opposite bank looking for Dolly, who had not waited for him; who had gone off without a word from the place where he had expected to find her. Not even her incoherent "Oh, Robert, I am so sorry—I have heard—Mr. Raban has heard; he has found George for us!" not even her trustful, gentle look as she sprang to meet him seemed to mollify him. He looked any thing but sympathizing as he said, "I have been looking for you every where."

"Brown must have told him," thought Tom Morgan, who was wondering how he had found them out.)

"You really must not run off in this way.

I told you all along that all this—a—anxiety was quite unnecessary. George is well able to take care of himself. If I had not met Professor Brown, I really don't know now—"

"But what is to be done, Robert? Listen," interrupted Dolly. "He has enlisted; he was at Southampton yesterday."

And together they told Henley what had happened. Robert took it very coolly.

"Of course he has turned up," said Robert, "and we must now take the matter into our own hands, and see what is best to be done. I really think" (with a laugh) "he has done the best thing he could do."

Dolly was hurt again by his manner. Raban had said the same thing, but it had not jarred upon her.

"I see you do not agree with me," continued Robert. "Perhaps, Raban, you will give me the name of the person who recognized George Vanborough? I will see him myself."

"He is a man whom we all know," said Raban, gravely—"Mr. Penfold, my late wife's father;" and he looked Robert full in the face.

Dolly wondered why Robert flushed and looked uncomfortable.

"Come," he said, suddenly drawing her hand through his arm with some unnecessary violence, "shall we walk back, Dora? There are some other things which I must see about, and I should be glad to consult you immediately." And he would have walked away at once, but she hung back for a moment to say one more grateful word to Frank.

Then Robert impatiently dragged her off, and Raban with his foot kicked at a stone that happened to be lying in the path, and it fell with a circling plash into the river.

Meanwhile Robert was walking away, and poor Dolly, who had not yet recovered from her agitation, was stumbling alongside, weary and breathless. He had her arm in his; he was walking very rapidly; she could hardly keep up with his strides.

This was the moment chosen by Robert Henley to say: "I want you now to bring your mind to something which concerns myself, Dora, and you. I came here to-day not only to please you, but also because I had business to attend to. The Vice-Chancellor has, really in the most pleasant and flattering manner, been speaking to me about my appointment, and I have brought a letter for you."

"I am so confused, Robert," said Dolly. "I will read it to you, then," said Robert; and immediately, in a clear, trumpet-like voice, he began to do so, stopping every now and then to give more emphasis to his sentences.

The letter was from the Board of Management of the College at Bogglywollah. They

seemed to be in a difficulty. The illness of Mr. Martindale had already caused great delay and inconvenience; the number of applications had never been so numerous; the organization never so defective. In the event of Mr. Henley's being able to anticipate his departure by three weeks, the Board was empowered to offer him a quarter's additional salary, dating from Midsummer instead of from Michaelmas: it would be a very great assistance to them if he could fall in with this proposal. A few lines of entreaty from Mr. Martindale were added.

"It will have to come sooner or later," said Henley; "it is unfortunate every thing happening just now. My poor Dora, I am so sorry for all the anxiety you have had," he said, "and yet I am not sure that this is not the best thing that could happen under the circumstances;" and he attempted to take her hand and draw her to him.

Dolly stood, flushed and troubled and unresponsive. She hardly took Robert's meaning in, so absorbed had she been in other thoughts. For a moment after he spoke she stood looking away across the river to the plain beyond.

"The college must wait," said she, wearily. Then suddenly, "You know, I couldn't leave them now, Aunt Sarah and every one; and you, Robert, couldn't leave me. Don't let us talk about it!"

Robert did not answer immediately. "It is no use," he said, deliberately, "shirking disagreeable subjects. My dearest Dora, life has to be faced, and one's day's work has to be done. My work is to organize the college at Boggleywollah; you must consider that; and a woman's work is to follow her husband. Every woman when she marries must expect to give up her old ties and associations, or there could be no possible union otherwise; and my wife can be no exception to the general rule—"

"Robert, don't talk in this way," said Dolly, passionate and nervous. "I don't want you to frighten me."

"You are unreasonable again, dearest," said Robert, in his usual formula. "You must be patient, and let me settle for us both."

Robert might have been more touched if Dolly had spoken less angrily and decidedly.

"If I put off going," said Robert, soothingly, "I lose a great deal more than the quarter's salary—I lose the prestige; the great advantage of finding Martindale. I lose three months, which, in the present state of affairs, may cause irreparable hindrance. Three months?—six months! Lady Sarah's illness may last any indefinite period: who can say how long it may last? and Lady Sarah herself, I am convinced, would never wish you to change your plans, and your mother will soon have her husband to protect her. You would not have

the heart to send me off alone, Dolly. Is the alternative so very painful to you?" he said again. And Robert smiled with a calm and not very anxious expression, and looking down at her.

Suddenly it all rushed over Dolly. He was in earnest!—in earnest!—impossible. He meant her to go off now, directly, without seeing George; without hearing from him again; while her aunt was lying on her sick-bed. How could she go? He should not have asked such a sacrifice. She did not pause to think.

"No, a thousand times no, Robert!" she cried, passionately. "You can't go. If you love me, stay," she said, with great agitation. "I know you love me. I know you will do as I wish—as it is right to do. Don't go. Dearest Robert, you *mustn't* go." Her voice faltered; she spoke in her old soft tone, with imploring looks, and trembling hands put out. Robert Henley might have hesitated, but the "*must not*" had spoiled it all.

"You know what pain it gives me to refuse your request," said Robert; "but I have considered the subject as anxiously on your account as mine. I—really I can not give up my career at this juncture. You have promised to come with me. If you love me you will not hesitate. You can do your aunt no real good by remaining. You can do George no good; and, besides, you belong to me," said Robert, growing more and more annoyed. "As I told you before, I must now be your first consideration; otherwise—" He stopped.

"Otherwise what?" said Dolly.

"Otherwise you would not be happy as my wife," he said, beating his foot upon the gravel, and looking steadily before him.

"Robert!" said Dolly, blushing up, "you would not wish me to be ungrateful."

"To whom?" said Robert. "You propose to postpone every thing indefinitely, at a time when I had fully calculated upon being settled in life; when I had accepted an appointment chiefly with a view to our speedy marriage. There is no saying how long your conscience may detain us," cried Henley, getting more and more provoked; "nor how many people may fall ill, nor how often George may think proper to make off. You do not perceive how matters stand, dear Dora."

Was this all he had to say? Her heart began to beat with a swift emotion.

"I understand you quite well," she said, in a low voice. "But, Robert, I too have made up my mind, and I can not leave them, not even for you. You should never have asked it of me," she cried, with pardonable indignation.

"I am not aware that I have ever asked any thing that was not for your good as well as my own," said Henley, in an offend-

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THUS FAR THE MILES ARE MEASURED FROM
THY FRIEND.

THE three came back to All-Saints by many a winding way. Raban met them at the college gate in his rusty black gown; he had to attend some college meeting after chapel. Two or three young men were standing about expecting them.

"You will find the tea is all ready," said Fieldbrook, gayly; "are you sure, Miss Vanborough, that you would not like something more substantial? My laundress has just been here to ask whether you were an elderly lady, and whether you would wish your bread-and-butter cut thick or thin. Let me introduce Mr. Magniac, Mr. Smith, Mr. Irvine, Mr. Richmond; Mr. Morgan you know."

Dolly smiled. The young men led her back across the court (as she crossed it the flowers were distilling their odors in the evening light); they opened the oak door of the very room she had looked into in the morning, and stood back to let her pass. The place had been prepared for her coming. Tea was laid, and a tower of bread-and-butter stood in the middle of the table. Books were cleared away, some flowers were set out in a cup. Fieldbrook heaped on the coals and made the tea, while Raban brought her the arm-chair to rest in. It was a pretty old oak-paneled room beneath the library. A little flat kettle was boiling on the fire; the young men stood round about, kind and cheery; Dolly was touched and comforted by their kindness, and they, too, were charmed with her sweet natural grace and beauty.

It was difficult not to compare this friendly courtesy and readiness with Robert's coldness. There was Raban ready to do her bidding at any hour; here was Mr. Fieldbrook emptying the whole canister into the tea-pot to make her a cup of tea; Smith had rushed off to order a fly for her. Robert stood silent and black by the chimney; he never moved, nor seemed to notice her presence. If she looked at him he turned his head away, and yet he saw her plainly enough. He saw Raban too. Frank was standing behind Dolly's chair, in the faint green light of the old oriel-window. It tinted his old black gown and Dolly's shadowy head as she leaned back against the oaken panel. One of the young men thought of an ivory head he had once seen set in a wooden frame. As for Frank, he knew that for him a pale ghost would henceforth haunt that oriel—a fair, western ghost, with anxious eyes, that were now following Robert as he crossed the room with measured steps and went to look out for the fly. Tom Morgan and Mr. Magniac began a series of jokes; Mr. Richmond poked the fire; Mr. Irvine opened the window.

As he left the room they all seemed to

ed tone. "I begin to think you have never loved me, Dora, or you would not reproach me with my love for you. Who has influenced you?" said he, jealously. "What does it all mean?"

She stopped short, and stood looking at him steadily, wistfully—not as she used to look once, but with eyes that seemed to read him through and through, until the tears came once more to blind their keen sight.

Raban, who had crossed by the ferry, and who was walking back along the opposite side, saw the two standing by the river-side, a man and a woman, with a plain beyond, and a city beyond the plain.

The sun was setting, sadly gray and russet; the long day's mists dispersing; light clouds were slowly rising; turf and leaves stood out against the evening; it was all clear and sweet and faintly colored; a tranquil peace seemed to have fallen every where. It was not radiance, but peace and subdued calm. Who does not know these evenings? Are they sad? Are they happy? A break in the shadow. A passing medley of the lights of heaven and earth, of sweet winds and rising vapors.....The cool breeze came blowing into their faces, and Dolly turned her head away and looked across the river to the opposite bank. When she spoke again she was her old self once more.

She was quite calm now; her eyes no longer wet. "Robert," she said, "I have something to tell you. I have been thinking things over, and I see that it is right that you should go; but it is also right that I should stay," said Dolly, looking him steadily in the face; "and, perhaps, in happier times you will let me come to you, or come back for me, and you must not—you will not—think I do not love you because of this."

What was it in her voice that seemed to haunt him—to touch, to thrill that commonplace man for one instant into some emotion? She was so simple and so sad; she looked so fair and wistful.

But it was only for an instant. "Do you mean that you wish to break the engagement?" he asked, in his coldest voice.

"If we love each other, what does it matter that we are free?" said Dorothea, with a very sweet look in her face. "You need fear no change in me," she said, "but I want you to be free." Her voice failed, and she began to walk on quickly.

"Remember it is your own doing," she heard him say, as Tom Morgan, who had lingered behind, caught them up. "But we will speak of all this again," he added.

Dolly bent her head; she could not trust herself to answer.

breathe more freely. Raban sat down by Dolly, and began telling her of a communication he had had from Yorkshire, from his old grandfather, who seemed disposed to take him into favor again, and who wanted him to go back and manage the estate.

"I am very much exercised about it," said Frank. "It is going into the land of bondage, you know. The old couple have used me very ill."

"But of course you must go to them," said Dolly, trying to be interested, and to forget her own perplexities. "We shall miss you dreadfully, but you must go."

"You will not miss me as I shall miss you," said Frank.

And as he spoke, Robert's head appeared at the window.

"The fly is come; don't keep it waiting, Dora," said Robert, impatiently.

"And you will let me know if ever I can do any thing for you?" persisted Frank, in defiance of Henley's black looks.

"Of course I will. I shall never forget your kindness," said Dolly, quickly putting on her shawl.

The bells were clanging all over the place for an evening service. Doors were banging, voices calling: figures came flitting from every archway.

"There goes the reader! he is late," said Tom Morgan, as a shrouded form darted across their path. Then he pointed out the Rector, a stately figure in a black and rustling silk, issuing from a side-door; and then Rector, friendly young men, arches, gable ends, had vanished, and Dolly and Robert were driving and jolting through the streets together, jolting along through explanation and misunderstanding, and over one another's susceptibilities, and over chance ruts and stones, on their way to the station. He began immediately.

"We were interrupted in our talk just now; but I have really very little more to say. If you are dissatisfied, if you really wish to break off your engagement, it is much better to say so at once, without making me appear ridiculous before all those men. Perhaps," said Henley, "we may have both made some great mistake, and you have seen some one whom you would prefer to myself?"

"You must not say such things, Robert," answered Dolly, with some emotion. "You know how unhappy I am. I only want you to let me love you. What more can I say?"

"Your actions and your words scarcely agree, then," said Henley, jealous and implacable. "I confess I shall be greatly surprised, on my return from India at some indefinite period, to find you still in the same mind. I, myself, make no professions of extra constancy."

"Oh, you are too cruel!" cried poor Dolly, exasperated.

"Will you promise me never to see Raban, for instance?" said Robert.

"How can I make such a promise?" cried Dolly, indignant. "To turn off a kind friend for an unjust fancy! If you trust me, Robert, you must believe what I say. Anyway, you are free. Only remember that I shall trust in your love until you yourself tell me that you no longer care for me."

The carriage stopped as she spoke. Robert got out and helped her down, produced the tickets, and paid the flyman.

The two went back in a dreary *tête-à-tête*; she wanted a heart's sympathy, and he placed a rug at her feet and pulled up the carriage window for fear of a draught. She could not thank him, nor look pleased. Her head ached, her heart ached; one expression of love, one word of faithful promise, would have made the world a different place, but he had not spoken it. He had taken her at her word. She was to be bound, and he was to be free. The old gentleman opposite never looked at them, but instantly composed himself to sleep; the old lady in the corner thought she had rarely seen a more amiable and attentive young man, a more ungracious young lady.

Once only Robert made any allusion to what had passed. "There will be no need to enter into explanations at present," he said, in a somewhat uneasy manner. "You may change your mind, Dora."

"I shall never change my mind," said Dolly, wearily, "but it is no use troubling mamma and Aunt Sarah; I will tell them that I am not going away. They shall know all when you are gone."

Dolly might have safely told Mrs. Palmer, who was not often disquieted by other people's sacrifices. With Lady Sarah it was different. But she was ill, and she had lost her grasp of life. She asked no question, only she seemed to revive from the day when Dolly told her that she was not going to leave her. It was enough for her that the girl's hand was in hers.

What is Dolly thinking of, as she stands by the sick-bed, holding the frail hand? To what future does it guide her? Is it to that which Dolly has sometimes imagined contained within the walls of a home, simple, as some people's lives are, and hedged with wholesome briars, and darling home ties, and leading straight, with great love and much happiness and sacred tears, to the great home of love? or is it to a broad way, unhedged, unfenced, with a distant horizon, a way unsheltered in stormy weather, easily missed, but wide and free and unshackled?.....

Mrs. Palmer, who troubled herself little about the future, was forever going off to Dean's Yard, where the Henleys were comfortably established. The eldest daughter was married, but there were two lively girls still at home; there were young officers

coming and going about the place. There was poor Jonah preparing to depart on his glorious expedition. He was in good spirits; he had a new uniform. One day, hearing his aunt's voice, he came in to show himself, accoutred and clanking with chains. He was disappointed to find that Dolly was not there, as he had expected. Bell admired loudly, but her mother almost screamed to him to go and take the hideous thing off. The dry, brisk-tongued little woman was feeling his departure very acutely. She still made an effort to keep up her old cynical talk, but she broke down, poor soul, again and again; she had scarcely spirit left to contradict Philippa, or even to forbid her the house.

The first time she had seen Dolly she had been prepared to criticise the girl; Norah and Bell were more cordial, but Lady Henley offered her niece a kid glove and a kid cheek, and was slightly disappointed to find that Dolly's frivolity, upon which she had been descanting all the way to Church House, consisted in an old gray gown and a black apron, and in two black marks under her eyes, for poor Dolly had not had much sleep after that dismal talk with Robert. This was the day after the Cambridge expedition. Miss Vanborough was looking very handsome, notwithstanding the black marks, and she unconsciously revenged herself upon Lady Henley by a certain indifference and preoccupation, which seemed to put her beyond the reach of that lady's passing shafts, but one of them wounded her at last.

"I suppose Lady Sarah will be left to servants when you go?" says Lady Henley. "Your mother is certainly not to be counted on; Hawtreys is a much better nurse than she is. Poor dear Philippa! she sees every thing reflected in a looking-glass. Your school is a different one altogether from our plain, old-fashioned country ways."

Dolly looked surprised; she had not deserved this unprovoked attack from the little gayly dressed lady perched upon the sofa. Norah was very much distressed by her mother's rudeness; Bell was struggling with a nervous inclination to giggle, which was the effect it always produced upon her.

"I have no doubt mamma would take care of my aunt if it were necessary," said Dolly, blushing with annoyance; "but I am not going away," she said. "Robert and I have settled that it is best I should stay behind. We have made up our minds to part."

The two girls were listening, open-eared. "Then she has never cared for him, after all," thought Bell.

But Lady Henley knew better. Notwithstanding a more than usual share of jealousy and cross-grainedness, she was not without a heart. Dolly's last words had been spoken very quietly, but they told the whole story. "My dear" said the little woman,

jumping up suddenly and giving her a kiss, "I did not know this" (there were tears shining among the new green bonnet strings); "my trial is close at hand. You must forgive me, I—I am very unhappy." She made a struggle, and recovered herself quickly, but from that minute Dolly and her aunt Joanna were good friends.

The next time Robert called in Dean's Yard he was put through a cross-examination by Lady Henley. "When was he coming back for Dolly? What terms were they on?" Sir Thomas came in to hear all about it, and then Jonah sauntered in. "Only wish I could get a chance," said Jonah. Robert felt disinclined to give Jonah the chance he wished for. Lady Henley was now praising Dolly as much as she had abused her before, and Robert agreed to every thing. But he gave no clew to the state of his mind. He was surprised to find how entirely Lady Henley ignored his feelings, and sympathized with Dolly's determination to remain behind. He walked away thinking that it was far from his intention to break entirely with Dolly, but he had not forgiven her yet; he was not sorry to feel his liberty in his own hands again. He meant to come back, but he chose to do it of his own free-will, and not because he was bound by any promise.

As for Dolly, she was absorbed; she was not feeling very much just then; she had been overwrought and overstrained. A dull calm had succeeded to her agitation, and, besides, Robert was not yet gone.

CHAPTER XL.

UNDER THE CLOCK-TOWER.

AN archway leads out of the great thoroughfare from Westminster Bridge into the sudden silence of Dean's Yard, where Sir Thomas had taken the house of a country neighbor. It stood within the cloisters of the Abbey, overtowered, overlocked, with bells pealing high overhead (ringing the hours away, the poor mother used to think). Dolly found time one day to come for half an hour to see Jonah before he left. She had a great regard for him. She had also found a staunch friend in Norah with the gray eyes like her own. Bell told Dolly in confidence that her mother had intended Robert to marry Norah, but this had not at all interfered with the two girls' liking for one another. Mrs. Palmer, who was going on farther, set Dolly down at the archway, and as the girl was crossing the yard she met Robert coming from the house. He was walking along by the railing, and among the dead leaves that were heaped there by the wind. Dolly's heart always began to beat now when she saw Robert. This time