

space. When Frank got back to Cambridge he found a telegram summoning him at once to Harrogate. It was sent by some unknown person.

People part; each carries away so much of the other's life; very often the exchange is a hard-driven bargain, willingly paid, indeed, which the poor debtor is in no inclination to resent. A whole heart's fidelity and remembrance in sleepless nights, tendered prayers, and blessings, in exchange for a little good grammar, a pleasant recollection, and some sand and ink and paper, all of which Dolly duly received that evening. All day long she had been haunted by that little scene at the well; it seemed to bring her nearer to Henley, and his letter came as an answer to her thoughts. George's letter had been for them all. Robert's was for herself alone, and she took it up to her room to read.

Robert's letter was not very short, it was sufficiently stamped, it said all that had to be said; and yet "How unreasonable I am! how can men feel as women do?" thought Dolly, kissing the letter to make up for her passing disappointment. Then came a thought, but she put it away with a sort of anger and indignation. She would not let herself think of Frank with pity or sympathy. It seemed disloyal to Robert to be sorry for the poor tutor.

Lady Henley also received a blotted scrawl from Jonah by that same post, and she made up her mind at last to go home, and she sent the brougham for Dolly and her mother to come and wish her good-by. On her first arrival Dolly was pounced upon by her cousins and taken in to Sir Thomas. When she came up stairs at last she found her aunt and her mother in full committee, apparently on good terms, and with their heads close together. The little lady was upon the sofa. Mrs. Palmer was upon the floor, in a favorite attitude. There only could she find complete rest, she said. Lady Henley had a great heap of Jonah's clothes upon the sofa beside her; she had been folding them up and marking them with her own hands. The drawing-room seemed full of the sound of the bells from the towers outside, and autumn leaves were dropping before the windows.

"Come here," said Lady Henley, holding out her hand to Dolly. "I have been talking to your mother about you. Look at her—as if there were no chairs in the room! I wanted to show you Jonah's letter. Foolish boy, he sends you his love. I don't know why I should give the message. You know you don't care for him, Dolly. Have you heard from Robert? Is he properly heart-broken?" with a sort of hoarse laugh. "Jonah mentions that he seems in very good spirits." Then Lady Henley became agitated. Dolly stood silent and embarrassed. "Why

don't you answer?" said her aunt, quite fiercely. "You can't answer; you can't show us his letter; you know in your heart that it has been a foolish affair. Your mother has told me all."

Lady Henley was flushed, and getting more and more excited, and, at the same time, a great jangling of bells came into the room from the abbey towers outside. Philippa gave one of her silvery laughs, and starting actively to her feet, came and put her arm round Dolly's waist.

"All! No indeed, Joanna. Delightful creature as he is, Robert tells one nothing. Forgive me, dearest, it is a fact. He really seemed quite to forget what was due to me, a lady in her own drawing-room, when he said good-by to you. I only mention it, for he is not generally so *empressé*, and if he had only explained himself—"

"What have you been saying, mamma?" said Dolly, blushing painfully. "There is nothing to explain."

"There is every thing to explain," burst in Lady Henley, from her corner; "and if you were my own daughter, Dolly, I should think it my duty to remonstrate with you, and to tell you frankly what I have always said from the beginning. There never was the slightest chance of happiness in this entanglement for either of you: take the advice of an older woman than yourself. Robert has no more feeling for you than—than—a fish, or do you think he would consent to be free? Ah! if you were not so blinded. There is one honest heart," she said, incoherently, breaking down for an instant. She quickly recovered, however, and Dolly, greatly distressed, stood looking at her, but she could not respond; if ever she had swerved, her faithful heart had now fully returned to its first allegiance. All they said seemed only to make her feel more and more how entirely her mind was made up.

"Robert and I understand each other quite well," said Dolly, gravely; "I wish him to be free. It is my doing, not his. Please don't speak of this to me or to any one else again."

She had promised to herself to be faithful, whatever came. Her whole heart had gone after Robert as he left her. She knew that she loved him. With all her humility, the thought that she had made a mistake in him had been painful beyond measure. It seemed to her now that she was answerable for his faith, for his loyalty, and she eagerly grasped at every shadow of that which she hoped to find in him.

She walked away to the window to hide her own gathering tears. The bells had come to an end suddenly. Some children were playing in the middle of the road and pursuing one another, and a stray organ-man, seeing a lady at the window, pulled out his stop and struck up a dreary tune—

"Partant pour la Syrie, le jeune et beau Dunois." It was the tune of those times, but Dolly could never hear it afterward without a sickening dislike. Dolly, hearing the door bang, turned round at last.

"My dear Dolly, she is gone—she is in a passion—she will never forgive you," said Philippa, coming up in great excitement.

But she was mistaken. Lady Henley sent Dolly a little note that very evening.

"MY DEAR,—I was very angry with you to-day. Perhaps I was wrong to be angry. I will not say forgive an old woman for speaking the truth; it is only what you deserve. You must come and see us when you can in Yorkshire. We all feel you belong to us now. Yours affectionately,

"J. HENLEY."

"P.S.—I see in this evening's paper that our poor old neighbors at Ravensrick died at Harrogate within a day of one another. I suppose your friend Frank Raban comes into the property."

CHAPTER XLIII.

CRAGS AND FRESH AIR.

THE old town of Pebblesthwaite, in Yorkshire, slides down the side of a hill into the hollow. Rocks overtop the town-hall, and birds flying from the crags can look straight down into the gray stone streets, and upon the flat roofs of the squat houses. Pebblesthwaite lies in the heart of Craven—a country little known, and not yet within the tramp of the feet of the legions. It is a district of fresh winds and rocky summits, of thymy hill-sides, and of a quaint and arid sweetness. The rocks, the birds, the fresh rush of the mountain streams as they dash over the stones, strike Southerners most curiously. We contrast this pleasant turmoil with the sleepy lap of our weed-laden waters, the dull tranquillity of our fertile plains. If we did not know that we are but a day's journey from our homes, we might well wonder and ask ourselves in what unknown country we are wandering. Strange-shaped hills heave suddenly from the plains; others, rising and flowing tumultuously, line the horizon: overhead great clouds are advancing, heaped in massive lines against a blue and solid sky. These clouds rise with the gusts of a sudden wind that blows into Frank Raban's face as he comes jogging through the old town on his way to the house from which he had been expelled seven years before, and to which he is now returning as master. Smokethwaite is the metropolis of Pebblesthwaite, near which is Ravensrick. The station is on a little branch line of rail, starting off from the main line toward these rocks and crags of Craven.

Frank had come down with the Henleys, and seen them all driving off in the carriages and carts that had come down to meet them from the Court. Nothing had come for him,

and he had walked to the inn and ordered the trap.

"Where art goin'?" shouts a pair of leather gaiters standing firm upon the doorstep of an old arched house opposite.

"Ravensrick Court," says the driver.

"'Tis a blustering day," says old leather gaiters.

The driver cracks his whip, and begins to do the honors of Pebblesthwaite as the horse clatters over the stones. "Do ye ken t' shambles?" he says, pointing to an old arched building overtopped by a great crag.

"I know it as well as you do," says Frank, smiling.

Can it be seven years since he left? Raban looks about: every stone and every pane of glass seem familiar. The town was all busy and awake. The farmers, sturdy, crop-headed, with baskets on their arms, were chattering and selling, standing in groups, or coming in and out of shops and doorways, careful as any housewives over their purchases. There were strange stores—shoes, old iron, fish, all heaped together; seven years older than when the last market-day Frank was there, but none the worse for that. There was the old auctioneer, in his tall, battered hat, disposing of his treasures. He was holding up a horse's yoke to competition. "Three shillin'! four shillin'!" says he. The people crowd and gape round. One fellow, in a crimson waistcoat, driving past in a donkey-cart, stops short and stares hard at the trap and at Raban. Frank knew him, and nodded with a smile. Two more stumpy leather gaiters, greeting each other, looked up as he drove by, and grinned. He remembered them too. There was the old Quaker, in his white neckcloth, standing at the door of his handsome old shop; and Squire Anley, walking along to the bank, all dressed from head to foot in loose gray clothes, with his bull-terrier at his heels. And then they drove out into the straight country roads; under the bridge between stone hedges, beyond which the late flames of summer green were still gleaming—the meadows still shone with spangling autumn flowers. Far away in the hollow hung the smoke of the factory, with its many windows; a couple of tall chimneys spouted blackness; a train was speeding northward; close at hand a stream was dashing; the great trees seemed full of birds. It was a different world from that in which he had been basking. Frank already felt years younger as he drove along the road—the old boyish impulses seemed waiting at every turn. "Why, there goes old Brand," he cried, leaning forward eagerly to look after an old keeper, with a couple of dogs, walking off with a gun toward the hills.

Frank called after the keeper, but the wind carried away his voice. As he drove along by each stile and corner that seemed

to have awaited his coming, he suddenly thought of his talk with Dorothea. She had been cruelly hard to him, but he was glad to think now that he had followed her advice about forgiveness of injuries, and made an advance to the poor old people who were now gone. It would have been absurd to pretend to any great sorrow for their death. They had lived their life, and shown him little kindness while it lasted. It was a chance now that brought him back to Ravensrick again.

He had written an answer to his grandfather's letter, and accepted his offer, but the only answer which ever came to this was the telegram summoning him to Harrogate. It had been delayed on the way; and as he went down in the train the first thing he saw was a paragraph in the *Times*: "At the Mitre Hotel, Harrogate, on the 28th instant, John Raban, Esq., of Ravensrick, Pebbles-thwaite, aged 86; and on the following day, Antonia, widow of the above John Raban, Esq., aged 75." The old squire had gone to Harrogate for the benefit of his health, but he had died quite suddenly; and the poor lady to whom he had left every thing, notwithstanding his injunctions and elaborate directions as to her future disposal of it, sank the night after his death, unable to struggle through the dark hours.

And then came confusion, undertakers, lawyers, and agents, in the midst of which some one thought of sending for Frank. He was the old couple's one grandson, and the old lady had left no will. So the tutor came in for the savings of their long lives, the comfortable old house, the money in the bank, the money in the funds, the ox and the ass, and the man-servant and the maid-servant, who had had their own way for so many years past, and preyed upon the old couple with much fidelity. They all attended the funeral in new suits of mourning ordered by the agent. Frank recognized many of them. There was the old housekeeper, who used to box his ears as a little boy; the butler, who used to complain of him. He was oppressed by all these yards of black cloth, and these dozens of white pocket-handkerchiefs; and he let them return alone to Ravensrick, and followed in the course of a day or two.

There are harsh words and unkind judgments in life, but what a might of nature, of oblivion and distraction, is arrayed in battle against them; daylight, lamp-light, sounds of birds and animals, come in between, and turn the slander, the ill-spoken sentence and its fierce retort, from its path. What do harsh words matter that were spoken a week ago? Seven days' sunshine have brightened since then. While I am railing at false friends and harsh interpretations, the clematis flowers have starred the wavering curtain of green that shades my

window from the light; the old Norman steeple has clanged the blue hours; the distant flow of the sea has reached me, with a sound of the twitter of birds in accompaniment. Is it six months ago since A judged B unkindly? A and B, walking by the opal light of the distant horizon, are thinking no more of coldness and unkindness, but of the fresh sweetness of the autumnal sea. Even to the harshest of us Nature is kind.

As Frank comes driving along the well-known road, and the fresh, blustering winds blow into his face, past unkindness matters little; every gust sends it farther away. He thinks, with a vague sense of pity, of a poor little ghost that used to run hiding and shrinking away in dark corners; a little fatalist doomed to break windows, slam doors, and leave gates ajar, through which accusing geese, sheep, ponies, would straggle to convict him. He used to think they were all in one league against him. Twice a week on an average he was led up into his grandfather's study to be cross-examined, and to criminate himself hopelessly before that inexorable old judge. A handsome old man, with flowing white locks and a grand manner and opinion upon every subject. If old Mrs. Raban generally supplied the opinions, the language was the squire's own. Mrs. Raban had been a spoiled old beauty, rouged and frizzed and rustling; she disliked every one who interfered with her own importance. She adored her husband, and was jealous of him to the last. Some chance speech had set her against the poor little "heir," as some one called him, and she had decreed that he was a naughty and stupid little boy, and was to be kept in his place. There rises Frank's little doppelgänger before him, hanging his head, convicted of having broken the carriage window or some such offense; there sits the old judge in his arm-chair by the library table, dignified, stately, uttering magnificent platitudes, to which the ancestor in the cauliflower wig is listening with deep attention. Frank seems to hear the echo of his voice and the rustle of his grandmother's dress as she leaves the room: but the horse starts, a partridge scuffles across the road, and he comes back to the present again.

"Yan goes," says the driver, excitedly, standing up on his box. Then they pass a little tumble-down village, and there at a turn of the road rise the chimneys of Ravensrick, and Pen-y-ghent rearing its huge back behind them, and the iron gates, and the old avenue, and the crows flying, whirling, dancing, sliding in twos and threes and twenties—how often the little doppelgänger had watched their mystic dance! Had it been going on for seven years?

"There's t' Court," said Frank's companion, a good-humored, talkative man. "T' owd squire, he was res-pectit, but he let

things go." As he spoke they were passing by a cottage with a broken roof and a generally dilapidated, half-patched look; a ragged woman was standing at the door; two wild-looking children were rolling in the dust; at the same time a man on horseback, coming the contrary way, rode past them on the road. The driver touched his cap, the woman disappeared into the house.

"That's Thomas Close, t' agent," said Frank's companion.

Frank, looking back as the carriage turned, saw a curious little scene. One of the children, who was standing in the road, suddenly stamped and clinched his little fist at the agent as he passed. The man reined in his horse, leaned back, and cut at the child with his whip; the little boy, howling, ran into the cottage.

Frank asked the driver what he knew of the people in the cottage.

The man shrugged his shoulders. "Mary Styles, she is queer in her ways," said he; "i' t' habit o' snuffin' and drinkin'. Joe Styles, he follows t' squire's cart; t' agent give him notice la-ast Monday; he wer' down at our ya-ard wantin' work, poor chap," said the man, with a crack of the whip. "Thomas Close he says he will have nought nor bachelors upon t' farm. He's a—"

"Stop," said Frank; "I'll get down here. Take my portmanteau to the front-door and tell them to pay you, and say that—a—I am coming."

The man stared, and suddenly gave a low whistle as he drove off. Meanwhile the new squire walked up by the back way. He crossed the kitchen-garden and got on to the terrace. How well he knew the way! The lock of the gate was easier than it used to be, the walls were greener and thicker with leaves and trellis. The old couple were coming back no more, but the beds they had planted were bright with Michaelmas daisies and lilies, and crimson and golden berries with purple leaves were heaping the terrace, where a man was at work snipping at the overgrowth of the box hedges. There was the iron scrolled gate through which you could see the distant view of Pen-y-ghent. There was the old summer-house where he once kept a menagerie of snails, until they were discovered by Miss Meal, his grandmother's companion. Coming out of the garden, he found himself face to face with the long rows of doors and of windows, those deadly enemies of his youth; a big brown dog, like a fox, with a soft skin and a friendly nose, came trotting up with a friendly expression. It followed Frank along the back passage leading straight into the hall: it was one of those huge stone halls such as people in Yorkshire like. The man in armor stood keeping watch in his corner, the lantern swung, every chair was in its place, and the old man's hat and his dog-

skin gloves lay ready for him on the oak table.

Then Frank opened the dining-room door. It faced westward, and the light came sliding upon the floors and walls and shining old mirrors, just as he remembered it. There was the doctor of divinity in his gown and bands, who used to make faces at him as he sat at luncheon; there was the King Charles's beauty, leaning her cheek upon her hand, and pensively contemplating the door and watching her descendants pass through. This one walks firm and quick; he does not come shuffling and with care, though give him but time enough, and it may come to that. But, meanwhile, the ancestry on canvas, the old chairs with their fat seats and slim bandy-legs, the old spoons curling into Queen Anne scrolls, the books in the book-cases, all have passed out of the grasping old hands, and Frank, who had been denied twenty pounds often when he was in need, might help himself, now there was no one to oppose his right.

The next room is the library, and his heart beats a little as he opens the door. There is no one sitting there. The place is empty and in order; the chair is put against the wall; the oracle is silent; there is nothing to be afraid of any more.

Frank, as he stands in the torture-chamber, makes a vow to remember his own youth if, as time goes on, he should ever be tempted to be hard upon others. Then he walks across to the fire-place and rings the bell. It jangles long and loud; it startles all the respectable old servants, who are drinking hot beer, in their handsome mourning, in the housekeeper's room. Frank has to ring again before any body finds courage to come.

Perrin, the butler, refusing to move, two of the house-maids appear at last, hand in hand. They peep in at the door, and give a little shriek when they see the window open and Frank standing there. They are somewhat reassured when a very civil young master, with some odd resemblance to the old eagle-faced squire, requests them to light a fire and show him to a room.

"I came in the back way," he said. "I am Mr. Raban."

Frank declines the squire's room, the great four-post bedstead, and the mahogany splendor, and chooses a more modest apartment on the stairs, with a pretty view of the valley.

He came down to a somewhat terrible and solitary meal in the great dining-room; more than once he looked up at his ancestor, now too well-mannered to make faces at the heir.

All that evening Frank was busy with Mr. Close. He said so little, and seemed so indifferent, that the agent began to think that another golden age was come, and that, with a little tact and patience, he might be able

to rule the new squire as completely as he had ruled the old one. Close was a vulgar, ambitious man, of a lower class than is usual in his profession. He had begun life as a house agent. Most of the squire's property consisted in leases; he had owned a whole street in Smokethwaite, as well as a couple of mills let out to tenants.

"I dare say you won't care to be troubled with all these details," said the agent, taking up his books as he said good-night.

"You may as well leave them," said Frank, sleepily. "They will be quite safe if you leave them there, Mr. Close. I will just look them over once more."

And Mr. Close rather reluctantly put them down, and set out on his homeward walk.

It was very late. Frank threw open the window when he was alone, and stood on the step looking into the cool blackness; hazy and peaceful, he could just distinguish the cows in the fields, just hear the rush of the torrent at the bridge down below. He could see the dewy, veiled flash of the lights overhead. From all this he turned away to Mr. Close's books again. Until late into the night he sat adding and calculating and comparing figures. He had taken a prejudice against the agent, but he wanted to be sure of the facts before he questioned him about their bearing. It was Frank's habit to be slow, and to take his time. About one o'clock, as he was thinking of going to bed, something came scratching at the window, which opened down to the ground. It was the brown dog, Pixie, who came in, and springing up into the squire's empty chair, went fast asleep. When Frank got up to go to bed, Pixie jumped down, shook himself, and trotted up stairs at his heels.

Frank took a walk early next morning. What he saw did not give him much satisfaction. He first went to the little farm near the bridge. He remembered it trim and well kept. Many a time he had come to the kitchen door and poured out his troubles to kind Mrs. Tanner, the farmer's wife. But the farmer's wife was dead, and the farm had lost its trim, bright look. The flowers were in the garden, the torrent foamed, but the place looked forlorn; there was a bad smell from a drain; there was a gap in the paling, a general come-down-in-the-world look about the stables; and yet it was a pretty place, even in its present neglect. A stable-man was clanking about the yard, where some sheep were penned. A girl with gypsy eyes and a faded yellow dress stood at the kitchen door. She made way for Frank to pass. Tanner himself, looking shrunken, oldened, and worn out, was smoking his pipe by the hearth. He had been out in the fields, and was come in to rest among his old tankards and blackened pipes.

Frank was disappointed by the old man's

dull recognition. He stared at him and tapped his pipe.

"Ay, Sir," he said, "I know you, why not? Joe Start from t' 'Ploo' told me you hed com'. Foalks com's and go's. T' owd squire he's gone his way. He's com' oop again a young squire. T' owd farmer maybe will foller next. T' young farmer is a wa-aiting to step into his clogs."

Old Tanner turned a surly back upon Frank.

"Well, good-by," said the young landlord at last. "If Mrs. Tanner had been alive she would have been more friendly than you have been."

This plain speaking seemed to suit the old farmer, who turned stiffly and looked over his shoulder.

"She wer' kind to all," said he; "even to gra-aspin' landlords that bring ruin on the farmer, and think naught o' doublin' t' rent. I wo-ant leave t' owd pla-ace," said Tanner. "Ye ca-ant turn me out. I know ye would like to thrav it into t' pa-ark, but I'll pay t' la-ast farthin'. Close he wer' here again a-spyin', and he tould me ye had given him the lease. D— him."

"Don't swear, Tanner," said Frank, laughing. "Who wants your farm? what is it all about?" And then it all came out.

"There is some mistake; I will speak to Close," Frank said, walking off abruptly to hide his annoyance.

"T' cold-blooded fella," said old Tanner, settling down to his pipe again; but somehow it had a better flavor than before.

Close had not been prepared for Frank's early walk, and the new lease he was bringing for the new landlord to sign was already on its way to the Court. The old squire had refused to turn Tanner out, but the lease was up, and year by year the agent had added to the rent. It was a pretty little place, capable of being made into a comfortable dwelling-house, where Mr. Close felt he could end his days in peace. Old Tanner was past his work; it was absurd of him to cling on. There had been a battle between the two, and poor old Tanner had been going to the wall.

Presently Frank forgot his indignation, for he met an old friend down the steep lane that led to the moor.

James Brand was a picturesque figure, advancing between the hedges this bright September morning. He had heavy gaiters, a gun was slung across his shoulders, and a lurcher was leaping at his heels. The old fellow was straight and active, with two blue eyes like pools, and a face as seamed and furrowed as the rocks among which he lived.

"Thought ye wer' ne'er coomin, Mr. Frank," said he, quietly; "t' wife she sent me to look;" and he held out a horny hand.

He was very quiet; he turned silently and

led the way back to the little stone house built against the slope of the hill. The two trudged together: the keeper went a little ahead. Every now and then he looked over his shoulder with a glance of some satisfaction. Frank followed, stooping under the low doorway that led into the old familiar stone kitchen, with the long strings of oat-cake hanging to dry, its oak cupboard and deep window-sills, the great chimney, where Mrs. Brand was busied. Frank remembered every thing—the guns slung on the walls, the framed almanac, the stuffed wild fowl, the gleam of the mountain lake through the deep window, the face of the old nurse as she came to meet him. People who have been through trouble, and who have been absorbed in their own interests, sometimes feel ashamed when time goes on and they come back to some old home and discover what faithful remembrance has followed them all along, and love to which, perhaps, they never gave a thought. If old things have a charm, old love and old friendship are like old wine, with a special gentle savor of their own.

Frank had always remembered the Brands with kindness; once or twice at Christmas he had sent his old nurse a little remembrance, but that was all; he had never done any thing to deserve such affection as that which he read written upon her worn face. Her eyes were full of tears as she welcomed him. She said very little, but she took his hand and looked at him silently, and then almost immediately began to busy herself, bringing out oat-cake and wine from an oak chest that stood in the window.

"There is the old oak chest," said Frank, looking about; "why, nothing is changed, James!"

"We do-ant change," said James, looking about, with a silent sort of chuckle. Neither he, nor the old dame, nor the stout-built stone lodge was made to change. It was piled up with heavy stones; winter storms could not shake it, nor summer heats penetrate the stout walls.

This part of Craven country flows in strange and abrupt waves to the east and to the west. Rocks heap among the heather; winds come blowing across the moors, that lie gray and purple at mid-day, and stern and sweet in the evening and morning; rivers flow along their rocky beds; hawks fly past; eagles sometimes swoop down into this quaint world of stones and flowers.

Frank, standing at the door of the keeper's lodge, could look across to the Court and to the hills beyond, where the woods were waving; some natural feeling of exultation he may have felt, thinking that all this had come to him when he least expected it. Well, he would do his best, and use it for the best. He thought of one person who might have told him what to do, with whom, if

fate had been propitious, he would gladly have shared these sweet moors and wild flowers, these fresh winds and foaming torrents; but she had failed him, and sent him away with harsh words that haunted him still.

James, when they started again, brought him a light for his pipe, and the two trudged off together. James still went ahead. The dogs followed, baying.

"So t' squire's in his grave," said James. "Hé were a good friend to us," he said. "I'm glad no strangers coom t' fore. Ye should 'a cottoned oop t' old man, Mr. Frank."

"What could I do, James?" said Frank, after a moment's silence. "He forbade me the house. I am only here now by a chance. If there had been a will, I should probably have been far away."

"Twer' no cha-ance," said old James. "He ne'er thought o' disinheritin' ye; he were a proud ma-an. Twer' a moonth sin' I last saw t' ould man. He said, 'Wa'al! I'm a-going from Pebblesthwaite. Ye'll hav' another master, James, afore long; tell him t' thin the Walden wood, and tak' Mr. Fra-ank down t' hollow whar t' covers lie.' He took on sorely ne'er seeing ye, Sir."

Frank turned very red. "I wish I had known it sooner, James."

Frank came home from his talk with the keeper in a softened and grateful mind. The thought that no injustice had been meant, that his grandfather had been thinking of him with kindness, touched him, and made him ashamed of his long rancor. Now he could understand it all, for he felt that in himself were the germs of this same reticence and difficulty of expression. The letter he had thought so unkind had only meant kindness. It was too late now to regret what was past, and yet the thought of the dead man's good-will made him happier than he could have supposed possible. The whole place looked different, more home-like, less bristling with the past; the lonely little ghost of his childhood was exorcised, and no longer haunted him at every turn.

Frank, notwithstanding his outward calm, was apt to go to extremes when roused, and, after a few mornings spent over accounts with Mr. Close, he gave that gentleman very plainly to understand that although he did not choose to criticise what had passed, he wished his affairs to be conducted in future in an entirely different manner. The cottages were in a shameful state of disrepair; the rents were exorbitantly high for the accommodation given.....

Mr. Close stared at Frank. The young squire must be a little touched in the head. When Raban, carried away by his vexation, made him a little speech about the duties of a country gentleman and his agent, Mr. Close said, "Very true, Sir. Indeed, Sir? Jest

so." But he did not understand one word of it, and Frank might just as well have addressed one of the fat oxen grazing in the field outside.

"You will find I have always studied your interests, Sir," said Mr. Close, rubbing his hands, "and I shall continue to do so. Perhaps you will allow me to point out that the proposed improvements will amount to more than you expect. You will have heavy expenses, Sir. Some parties let their houses for a time: I have an offer from a wealthy gentleman from Manchester," said the irrepressible Close.

Frank shortly answered that he did not wish to let the house, and that he must arrange for the improvements. A domestic revolution was the consequence, for when the new master proposed to reduce the establishment the butler gasped, choked, and finally burst into tears. He could not allow such aspersions upon his character. What would his old master and mistress have said? His little savings were earned by faithful service, and sooner than see two under-footmen dismissed he should wish to leave.

Mrs. Roper, the housekeeper, also felt that the time was come for rest and a private bar. She had been used to three in the kitchen, and she should not be doing her duty by herself if she said she could do with less.

Raban let them all go, with a couple of years' wages. For the present he only wanted to be left alone. He staid on with a groom and a couple of countrywomen sent in by Mrs. Brand. They clattered about the great kitchen, and their red shock heads might be seen half a mile off. Of course the neighbors talked: some few approved; old friends who had known him before troubled themselves but little; the rest loudly blamed his proceedings. He was a screw; he had lived on a crust, and he now grudged every half-penny. He was cracked (this was Mr. Close's version); he had been in a lunatic asylum; he had murdered his first wife.

When the county began to call, in friendly basket-carriages and wagonettes, it would be shown in by Betty and Becky to the library and the adjoining room, in which Mr. Raban lived. Frank had brought the lurcher away from the keeper's lodge; it had made friends with the foxy terrier, and the two dogs would follow him about, or lie comfortably on the rug while he sat at work upon his papers. The periwigged ancestor looked on from the wall, indifferently watching all these changes. One table in the window was piled with business papers, leases, check-books, lawyers' letters in bundles. A quantity of books that Frank had sent for from London stood in rows upon the floor. After the amenities and regularities of the last few years, this easy life came as

a rest and reinvigoration. He did not want society. Frank was so taken up with schemes for sweeping clean with his new broom that he was glad to be free for a time, and absolved from the necessity of dressing, of going out to dinner, and making conversation. He would open his windows wide on starry nights. The thymy wind would sough into his face; clear beam the solemn lights; the woods shiver softly. Does a thought come to him at such times of a sick woman in an old house far away, of a girl with dark brows and a tender smile, watching by her bedside?

People who had been used to the pale and silent college tutor in his stuff gown might scarcely have recognized Frank riding about from farm to farm in the new and prosperous character of a country gentleman, begaitered and bewideawaked. The neighbors who exclaimed at the shabbiness of Mr. Frank's in-door establishment might also, and with more reason, exclaim at the regiment of barrows and men at work, at the drains digging, roofs repairing, fences painting. The melancholy outside tumble-down-looking houses were smartening up. The people stood at their doors watching with some interest and excitement the works as they hammered on.

Frank superintended it all himself. He was up to his waist in a ditch one day when the Henley party drove past in the break on their way to call at Ravensrick. They left a heap of cards—Sir Thomas and Lady Henley, Mr. Jonah Anley, Captain Boswarrick—and an invitation for him to dine and sleep the following day. The red-headed girls took the cards in, and grinned at the fine company; the fine company grinned in return at Sukey.

"Why, what sort of society can he have been used to?" cried little Mrs. Boswarrick. She was the eldest daughter: a pretty, plump little woman, very much spoiled by her husband, and by her father too, whose favorite she was.

"He has evidently not been used to associate with butlers and footmen," said Mr. Anley.

"Hulloh!" shouted Sir Thomas, as he drove out at the park gates. "Look there, Anley! he is draining Medmere, and there's a new window to the schools. By Jove!"

"Foolish young man!" said Mr. Anley, "wasting his substance draining cottages and lighting school-rooms!" and he looked out with some interest.

"Then, Uncle Jonah, you are foolish yourself," said Bell.

"Are you turned philanthropist, Uncle Jonah?" said Mrs. Boswarrick. "I wish some one would take me and Alfred up. What have you been doing?"

"I make it a rule never to do any thing at the time I can possibly put off till the

morrow," said Mr. Anley, apologetically. "My cottages were tumbling down, my dear, so I was obliged to prop them up."

"He bought them from papa," said Bell. "I can't think why."

"It is all very well for bachelors like you and Raban to amuse yourselves with rebuilding," said Sir Thomas, joining in from his box in an aggravated tone; "if you were a married man, Anley, with a wife and daughters and milliners' bills, you would see how much was left at the end of the year for improvements."

"To hear them talk, one oughtn't to exist at all," said Mrs. Boswarrick, with a laugh.

CHAPTER XLIV.

WHITE WITH GAZING.

FRANK accepted Lady Henley's invitation, and arrived at Henley Court just before dinner-time one day. The place lies beyond Pebblethwaite, on the Smokethwaite road. It was a more cheerful house than Ravensrick—a comfortable, modern, stone-piled house, built upon a hill, with windows north and south and east and west, with wide distant views of valleys and winding roads and moors. Through one break of the hills, when the wind blew south, the chimneys of Smokethwaite stood out clear against the sky; at other times a dull black cloud hung over the gap. The garden was charming: on one side a natural terrace overhung the valley; a copper beech rustled upon the lawn; and a few great chestnut-trees gave shade in summer to the young people of the house, to the cows browsing in the meadow, who would come up to the boundary fence to watch Miss Bell's flirtations with gentle curiosity, or the children at play, or to listen to Sir Thomas reading out the newspaper. He had a loud voice and a secret longing for Parliamentary distinction. When he read the speeches he would round his periods, address Lady Henley as "Sir," and imagine himself in his place, a senator in the company of senators. He was a stupid man, but hospitable, and popular in the neighborhood—far more so than Lady Henley, who was greatly disliked. Bell was fast, handsome. Norah was a gentle, scatter-brained creature, who looked up to every body; she especially adored her sister, Mrs. Boswarrick, who had captivated Captain Boswarrick one evening at a York ball, where she had danced down a whole regiment of officers. The captain himself was a small and languid man, and he admired energy in others. If Sir Thomas was fond of thundering out the debates, Captain Boswarrick had a pretty turn for amateur acting and reciting to select audiences. Some one once suggested private theatricals.

"Never while I live," said Lady Henley, "shall there be such mummeries in this house. If Alfred chooses to make a fool of himself and repeat verses to the girls, I have no objection, so long as he don't ask me to sit by."

"I never should have thought of asking you to sit by, Lady Henley," drawled Alfred.

When Frank was announced he found the young ladies in fits of laughter, Captain Boswarrick declaiming in the middle of the room, with Squire Anley and Mr. Redmayne for audience. Every body turned round, and the performance suddenly ceased when he entered. The squire nodded without getting up.

"How d'ye do?" said Mrs. Boswarrick, holding out half a dozen bracelets. "Mr. Raban forgets me, I can see. Sit down. Alfred hates being interrupted. Go on, Alfred!"

Captain Boswarrick's manner would quite change when he began to recite. He would stamp, start, gesticulate, and throw himself into the part with more spirit than could have been reasonably expected.

And now, with a glance at his wife, he began again with a stamp, and suddenly pointing—

"That morn owd York wor all alive
Wt' leal an' merry hearts;
For t' country foalks com' i' full drive
I gigs an' market-carts,
An' girt lang trains wi' whistlin' din,
Com' w-w-whirlin' up."

The little captain, suiting the action to the word, raised his arm with some action to represent the train. It was caught from behind by a firm grasp. Frank had not seen that he had been followed into the room by a stout little man in brand-new clothes, who joined the circle.

"Take care," said the stranger—he spoke with a slight Yorkshire accent. "What are you about, yo'ng man? What is all this? Very fascinating, very brilliant, very seductive, very much so, but leading to—what?" with a sudden drop of the voice and the hand he held. Bell went off into a shriek of laughter.

Captain Boswarrick flushed up. He might have resented the interruption still more if he had not been somewhat mollified by the string of compliments.

"Leading to— You would have heard all about it, Mr. Stock, if you had not stopped him," said Mr. Anley.

"Shall I make my meaning plainer?" said the little man, not heeding the interruption. "Shall I tell you what I mean? Social intercourse, music, poetry—dazzling, I own. I, too, have experienced the charm; I, too, have studied to please; but I have also discovered the vanity of vanities; so will you one day. A fact, though you don't believe me."