

to see the twisted form of the little minister stretched still and soldierlike beside him on the floor.

## CHAPTER XIV

FROM that waking David rose and went about his work another man. As he moved about in the shop or in the streets, he was conscious of a gulf between his present self and his self of yesterday, which he could hardly explain. Simply the whole atmosphere and temperature of the soul was other, was different. He could have almost supposed that some process had gone on within him during the unconsciousness of sleep, of which he was now feeling the results; which had carried him on, without his knowing it, to a point in the highroad of life, far removed from that point where he had stood when his talk with Ancrum began. That world of enervating illusion, that 'kind of ghastly dreaminess,' as John Sterling called it, in which since his return he had lived with Elise, was gone, he knew not how—swept away like a cloud from the brain, a mist from the eyes. The sense of catastrophe, of things irrevocable and irreparable, the premature ageing of the whole man, remained—only the fever and the restlessness were past. Memory, indeed, was not affected. In some sort the scenes of his French experience would be throughout his life a permanent element in consciousness; but the persons concerned in them were dead—creatures of the past. He himself had been painfully re-born, and Pimodan's wife had no present personal existence for him. He turned himself deliberately to his old life, and took up the interests of it again one by one, but, as he soon discovered, with an insight, a power, a comprehension which had never yet been his. A moral and spiritual life destined to a rich development practically began for him with this winter—this awful winter of the agony of France.

His thoughts were often occupied now with Louie, but in a saner way. He could no longer, without morbidness, take on himself the whole responsibility of her miserable marriage. Human beings after all are what they make themselves. But the sense of his own share in it, and the perception of what her future life was likely to be, made him steadily accept beforehand the claims upon him which she was sure to press.

He had written to her early in September, when the siege was imminent, offering her money to bring her to England, and the protection of his roof during the rest of the war. And by a still later post than that which brought the news of Elise's marriage arrived a scrawl from Louie, written from a country town near Toulouse, whither she and Montjoie had retreated—apparently the sculptor's native place.

The letter was full of complaints—complaints of the war, which was being mismanaged by a set of rogues and fools who deserved stringing to the nearest tree; complaints of her husband,

who was a good-for-nothing brute; and complaints of her own health. She was expecting her confinement in the spring; if she got through it—which was not likely, considering the way in which she was treated—she should please herself about staying with such a man. *He* should not keep her for a day if she wanted to go. Meanwhile David might send her any money he could spare. There was not much of the six hundred left—that she could tell him; and she could not even screw enough for baby-clothes out of her husband. Very likely there would not be enough to pay for a nurse when her time came. Well, then she would be out of it—and a good job too.

She wished to be remembered to Dora; and Dora was especially to be told again that she needn't suppose St. Damian's was a patch on the real Catholic churches, because it wasn't. She—Louie—had been at the Midnight Mass in Toulouse Cathedral on Christmas Eve. That was something like. And down in the crypt they had a 'Bethlehem'—the sweetest thing you ever saw. There were the shepherds, and the wise men, and the angels—dolls, of course, but their dresses were splendid, and the little Jesus was dressed in white satin, embroidered with gold—old embroidery, tell Dora.

To this David had replied at once, sending money he could ill spare, and telling her to keep him informed of her whereabouts.

But the months passed on, and no more news arrived. He wrote again *via* Bordeaux, but with no result, and could only wait patiently till that eagle's grip, in which all French life was stifled, should be loosened.

Meanwhile his relation to another human being, whose life had been affected by the French episode, passed into a fresh phase. Two days after the news of Elise's marriage had reached him, he and John had just shut up the shop, and the young master was hanging over the counter under the gas, heavily conning a not very satisfactory business account.

John came in, took his hat and stick from a corner, and threw David a gruff 'good night.'

Something in the tone struck David's sore nerves like a blow. He turned abruptly—

'Look here, John! I can't stand this kind of thing much longer. Hadn't we better part? You've learnt a lot here, and I'll see you get a good place. You—you rub it in too long!'

John stood still, his big rough hands beginning to shake, his pink cheeks turning a painful crimson.

'You—you never said a word to me!' he flung out at last, incoherently, resentfully.

'Said a word to you? What do you mean? I told you the truth, and I would have told you more, if you hadn't turned against me as though I had been the devil himself. Do you suppose you are the only person who came to grief because of that French time? *Good God!*'

The last words came out with a low exasperation. The young

man leant against the counter, looking at his assistant with bitter, indignant eyes.

John first shrank from them, then his own were drawn to meet them. Even his slow perceptions, thus challenged, realised something of the truth. He gave way—as David might have made him give way long before, if his own misery had not made him painfully avoid any fresh shock of speech.

'Well!' said John, slowly, with a mighty effort; 'I'll not lay it agen you ony more. I'll say that. But if you want to get rid of me, you can. Only you'll be put to 't wi' t' printing.'

The two young fellows surveyed each other. Then suddenly David said, pushing him to the door:

'You're a great ass, John—get out, and good night to you.'

But next day the atmosphere was cleared, and, with inexpressible relief on both sides, the two fell back into the old brotherly relation. Poor John! He kept an old photograph of Louie in a drawer at his lodging, and, when he came home to bed, would alternately weep over and denounce it. But, all the same, his interest in David's printing ventures was growing keener and keener, and whenever business had been particularly exciting during the day, the performance with the photograph was curtailed or omitted at night. Let no scorn, however, be thought, on that account, of the true passion!—which had thriven on unkindness, and did but yield to the slow mastery of time.

The war thundered on. To Manchester, and to the cotton and silk industries of Lancashire generally, the tragedy of France meant on the whole a vast boom in trade. So many French rivals crippled—so much ground set free for English enterprise to capture—and, meanwhile, high profits for a certain number at least of Manchester and Macclesfield merchants, and brisk wages for the Lancashire operatives, especially for the silk-weavers. This, with of course certain drawbacks and exceptions, was the aspect under which the war mainly presented itself to Lancashire. Meanwhile, amid these teeming Manchester streets with their clattering luries and overflowing warehouses, there was at least one Englishman who took the war hardly, in whom the spectacle of its wreck and struggle roused a feeling which was all moral, human, disinterested.

What was Regnault doing? David kept a watch on the newspapers, of which the Free Library offered him an ample store; but there was no mention of him in the English press that he could discover, and Barbier, of course, got nothing now from Paris.

Christmas was over. The last month of the siege, that hideous January of frost and fire, rushed past, with its alternations of famine within and futile battle without—Europe looking on appalled at this starved and shivering Paris, into which the shells were raining. At last—the 27th!—the capitulation! All was over; the German was master in Europe, and France lay at the feet of her conqueror.

Out to all parts streamed the letters which had been so long delayed. Barbier and David, walking together one bitter evening towards Barbier's lodgings, silent, with hanging heads, met the postman on Barbier's steps, who held out a packet. The Frenchman took it with a cry; the two rushed upstairs and fell upon the letters and papers it contained.

There—while Barbier sat beside him, groaning over the conditions of peace, over the enthronement of the Emperor-King at Versailles, within sight of the statue of Louis Quatorze, now cursing '*ces imbéciles du gouvernement!*' and now wiping the tears from his old cheeks with a trembling hand—David read the news of the fight of Buzenval, and the death of Regnault.

It seemed to him that he had always foreseen it—that from the very beginning Regnault's image in his thought had been haloed with a light of tragedy and storm—a light of death. His eyes devoured the long memorial article in which a friend of Regnault's had given the details of his last months of life. Barbier, absorbed in his own grief, heard not a sound from the corner where his companion sat crouched beneath the gas.

Everything—the death and the manner of it—was to him, as it were, in the natural order—fitting, right, such as might have been expected. His heart swelled to bursting as he read, but his eyes were dry.

This, briefly, was the story which he read.

Henri Regnault re-entered Paris at the beginning of September. By the beginning of October he was on active service, stationed now at Asnières, now at Colombes. In October or November he became engaged to a young girl, with whom he had been for long devotedly in love—ah! David thought of that sudden smile—the 'open door'! Their passion, cherished under the wings of war, did but give courage and heroism to both. Yet he loved most humanly! One night, in an interval of duty, on leaving the house where his *fiancée* lived, he found the shells of the bombardment falling fast in the street outside. He could not make up his mind to go—might not ruin befall the dear house with its inmates at any moment? So he wandered up and down outside for hours in the bitter night, watching, amid the rattle of the shells and the terrified cries of women and children from the houses on either side. At last, worn out and frozen with cold, but still unable to leave the spot, he knocked softly at the door he had left. The *concierge* came. 'Let me lie down awhile on your floor. Tell no one.' Then, appeased by this regained nearness to her, and by the sense that no danger could strike the one without warning the other, he wrapped himself in his soldier's cloak and fell asleep.

In November he painted his last three water-colours—visions of the East, painted for her, and as flower-bright as possible, 'because flowers were scarce' in the doomed city.

December came. Regnault spent Christmas night at the advanced post of Colombes. His captain wished to make him an

officer. 'Thanks, my captain,' said the young fellow of twenty-three; 'but if you have a good soldier in me, why exchange him for an indifferent officer? My example will be of more use to you than my commission.' Meanwhile the days and nights were passed in Arctic cold. Men were frozen to death round about him; his painter's hand was frostbitten. 'Oh! I can speak with authority on cold!' he wrote to his *fiancée*; 'this morning at least I know what it is to spend the night on the hard earth exposed to a glacial wind. Enough! *Je me réchaufferai à votre foyer*. I love you—I love my country—that sustains. Adieu!

On the 17th, after a few days in Paris spent with her and some old friends, he was again ordered to the front. On Thursday the fight at Buzenval began with a brilliant success; in the middle of the day his *fiancée* still had news of him, brought by a servant. Night fell. The battle was hottest in a wood adjoining the park of Buzenval. Regnault and his painter-comrade Clairin were side by side. Suddenly the retreat was sounded, and the same instant Clairin missed his friend. He sought him with frenzy amid the trees in the darkening wood, called to him, peered into the faces of the dying—no answer! Ah! he must have been swept backwards by the rush of the retreat—Clairin will find him again.

Three days later the lost was found—one among two hundred corpses of National Guards carted into Père Lachaise. Clairin, mad with grief, held his friend in his arms—held, kissed the beautiful head, now bruised and stained past even *her* knowing, with its bullet-wound in the temple.

On his breast was found a medal with a silver tear hanging from it. She who had long worn it as a symbol of bereavement, in memory of dear ones lost to her, had given it to him in her first joy. 'I will reclaim it,' she had said, smiling, 'the first time you make me weep!' It was all that was brought back to her—all except a scrawled paper found in his pocket, containing some hurried and almost illegible words, written perhaps beside his outpost fire.

'We have lost many men—we must remake them—*better—stronger*. The lesson should profit us. No more lingering amid facile pleasures! Who dare now live for himself alone? It has been for too long the custom with us to believe in nothing but enjoyment and all bad passions. We have prided ourselves on despising everything good and worthy. No more of such contempt!

Then—so the story ended—four days later, on the very day of the capitulation of Paris, Regnault was carried to his last rest. A figure in widow's dress walked behind. And to many standing by, amid the muffled roll of the drums and the wailing of the music, it was as though France herself went down to burial with her son.

David got up gently and went across to Barbier, who was sitting with his letters and papers before him, staring and stupefied, the lower jaw falling, in a trance of grief.

The young man put down the newspaper he had been reading in front of the old man.

'Read that some time; it will give you something to be proud of. I told you I knew him—he was kind to me.'

Barbier nodded, not understanding, and sought for his spectacles with shaking fingers. David quietly went out.

He walked home in a state of exaltation like a man still environed with the emotion of great poetry or great music. He said very little about Regnault in the days that followed to Ancrum or Barbier, even to Dora, with whom every week his friendship was deepening. But the memory of the dead man, as it slowly shaped itself in his brooding mind, became with him a permanent and fruitful element of thought. Very likely the Regnault whom he revered, whose name was henceforth a sacred thing to him, was only part as it were of the real Regnault. He saw the French artist with an Englishman's eyes—interpreted him in English ways—the ways, moreover, of a consciousness self-taught and provincial, however gifted and flexible. Only one or two aspects, no doubt, of that rich, self-tormented nature, reared amid the most complex movements of European intelligence, were really plain to him. And those aspects were specially brought home to him by his own mental condition. No matter. Broadly, essentially, he understood.

But thenceforward, just as Elise Delaunay had stood to him in the beginning for French art and life, and that ferment in himself which answered to them, so now in her place stood Regnault with those stern words upon his young and dying lips—'We have lost many men—we must remake them—*better!* Henceforward let no one dare live unto himself.' The Englishman took them into his heart, that ethical fibre in him, which was at last roused and dominant, vibrating, responding. And as the poignant images of death and battle faded he saw his hero always as he had seen him last—young, radiant, vigorous, pointing to the dawn behind Notre-Dame.

All life looked differently to David this winter. He saw the Manchester streets and those who lived in them with other perceptions. His old political debating interests, indeed, were comparatively slack; but persons—men and women, and their stories—for these he was instinctively on the watch. His eye noticed the faces he passed as it had never yet done—divined in them suffering, or vice, or sickness. All that he saw at this moment he saw tragically. The doors set open about him were still, as Keats, himself hurried to his end by an experience of passion, once expressed it, 'all dark,' and leading to darkness. There were times when Dora's faith and Ancrum's mysticism drew him irresistibly; other times when they were almost as repulsive to him as they had ever been, because they sounded to him like the formula of people setting out to explain the world 'with a light heart,' as Ollivier had gone to war.

But whether or no it could be explained, this world, he could not now help putting out his hand to meddle with and mend it; his mind fed on its incidents and conditions. The mill-girls standing on the Ancoats pavements; the drunken lurryman tottering out from the public-house to his lurry under the biting sleet of February; the ragged barefoot boys and girls swarming and festering in the slums; the young men struggling all about him for subsistence and success—these for the first time became realities to him, entered into that pondering of 'whence and whither' to which he had been always destined, and whereon he was now consciously started.

And as the months went on, his attention was once more painfully caught and held by Dora's troubles and Daddy's infirmities. For Daddy's improvement was short-lived. A bad relapse came in November; things again went downhill fast; the loan contracted in the summer had to be met, and under the pressure of it Daddy only became more helpless and disreputable week by week. And now, when Doctor Mildmay went to see him, Daddy, crouching over the fire, pretended to be deaf, and 'soft' besides. Nothing could be got out of him except certain grim hints that his house was his own till he was turned out of it. 'Looks pretty bad this time,' said the doctor to David once as he came out discomfited. 'After all, there's not much hope when the craving returns on a man of his age, especially after some years' interval.'

Daddy would sometimes talk frankly enough to David. At such times his language took an exasperating Shakespearean turn. He was abominably fond of posing as Lear or Jaques—as a man much buffeted, and acquainted with all the ugly secrets of life. Purcell stood generally for 'the enemy;' and to Purcell his half-mad fancy attributed most of his misfortunes. It was Purcell who had undermined his business, taken away his character, and driven him back to drink. David did not believe much of it, and told him so. Then, roused to wrath, the young man would speak his mind plainly as to Dora's sufferings and Dora's future. But to very little purpose.

'Aye, you're right—you're right enough,' said the old man to him on one of these occasions, with a wild, sinister look. 'Cordelia 'll hang for 't. If you want to do her any good, you must turn old Lear out—send him packing, back to the desert where he was before. There's elbow-room there!'

David looked up startled. The thin bronzed face had a restless flutter in it. Before he could reply Daddy had laid a hand on his shoulder.

'Davy, why don't you drink?'

'What do you mean?' said the young man, flushing.

'Davy, you've been as close as wax; but Daddy can see a thing or two when he chooses. Ah, you should drink, my lad. Let people prate—why shouldn't a man please himself? It's not the beastly liquor—that's the worst part of it—it's the *dreams*,

my lad, "the dreams that come." They say ether does the business cheapest. A teaspoonful—and you can be alternately in Paradise and the gutter four times a day. But the fools here don't know how to mix it.'

As he spoke the door opened, and there stood Dora on the threshold. She had just come back from a Lenten service; her little worn prayer-book was in her hand. She stood trembling, looking at them both—at David's tight, indignant lips—at her father's excitement.

Daddy's eye fell on her prayer-book, and David, looking up, saw a quick cloud of distaste, aversion, pass over his weird face.

She put out some supper, and pressed David to stay. He did so in the vain hope of keeping Daddy at home. But the old vagrant was too clever for both of them. When David at last got up to go, Daddy accompanied him downstairs, and stood in the doorway looking up Market Place till David had disappeared in the darkness. Then with a soft and cunning hand he drew the door to behind him, and stood a moment lifting his face to the rack of moonlit cloud scudding across the top of the houses opposite. As he did so, he drew a long breath, with the gesture of one to whom the wild airs of that upper sky, the rush of its driving wind, were stimulus and delight. Then he put down his head and stole off to the right, towards the old White Inn in Hanging Ditch, while Dora was still listening in misery for his return step upon the stairs.

A week later Dora, not knowing how the restaurant could be kept going any longer, and foreseeing utter bankruptcy and ruin as soon as the shutters should be up, took her courage in both hands, swallowed all pride, and walked up to Half Street to beg help of Purcell. After all he was her mother's brother. In spite of that long feud between him and Daddy, he would surely, for his own credit's sake, help them to escape a public scandal. For all his rodomontade, Daddy had never done him any real harm that she could remember.

So she opened the shop-door in Half Street, quaking at the sound of the bell she set in motion, and went in.

Twenty minutes afterwards she came out again, looking from side to side like a hunted creature, her veil drawn close over her face. She fled on through Market Place, across Market Street and St. Ann's Square, and through the tall dark warehouse streets beyond—drawn blindly towards Potter Street and her only friend.

David was putting out some books on the stall when he looked up and saw her. Perceiving that she was weeping and breathless, he asked her into the back room, while John kept guard in the shop.

There she leant against the mantelpiece, shaking from head to foot, and wiping away her tears. He soon gathered that she had been to Purcell, and that Purcell had dismissed her appeal

with every circumstance of cold and brutal insult. The sooner her father was in the workhouse or the lunatic asylum, and she in some nunnery or other, the sooner each would be in their right place. He was a vagabond, and she a Papist—let them go where they belonged. He was not going to spend a farthing of his hard-earned money to help either of them to impose any further on the world. And then he let fall a word or two which showed her that he had probably been at the bottom of some merciless pressure lately applied to them by one or two of their chief creditors. The bookseller's hour was come, and he was looking on at the hewing of his Agag with the joy of the righteous. So might the Lord avenge him of all his enemies.

Dora could hardly give an account of it. The naked revelation of Purell's hate, of so hard and vindictive a soul, had worked upon her like some physical horror. She had often suspected the truth, but now that it was past doubting, the moral shock was terrible to this tender mystical creature, whose heart by day and night lived a hidden life with the Crucified and with His saints. Oh, how could he, how could anyone, be so cruel?—her father getting an old man! and she, who had never quarrelled with him—who had nursed Lucy! So she wailed, gradually recovering her poor shaken soul—calming it, indeed, all the while out of sight, with quick piteous words of prayer and submission.

David stood by, pale with rage and sympathy. But what could he do? He was himself in the midst of a hard struggle, and had neither money nor credit available. They parted at last, with the understanding that he was to go and consult Ancrum, and that she was to go to her friends at St. Damian's.

Till now poor Dora had carefully refrained from bringing her private woes into relation with her life in and through St. Damian's. Within that enchanted circle, she was another being with another existence. There she had never asked anything for herself, except the pardon and help of God, before His altar, and through His priests. Rather she had given—given all that she had—her time, such as she could spare from Daddy and her work, to the Sunday-school and the sick; her hard-won savings on her clothes, and on the extra work, for which she would often sit up night after night when Daddy believed her asleep, to the poor and to the services of the Church. There she had a position, almost an authority of her own—the authority which comes of self-spending. But now this innocent pride must be humbled. For the sake of her father, and of those to whom they owed money they could not pay, she must go and ask—beg instead of giving. All she wanted was time. Her embroidery work was now better paid than ever. If the restaurant were closed she could do more of it. In the end she believed she could pay everybody. But she must have time. Yes, she would go to Father Vernon that night! He would understand, even if he could not help her.

Alas! Next morning David was just going out to dinner,

when a message was brought him from Market Place. He started off thither at a run, and found a white and gasping Dora wandering restlessly up and down the upper room; while Sarah, the old Lancashire cook, very red and very tearful, followed her about trying to administer consolation. Daddy had disappeared. After coming in about eleven the night before and going noisily to his room—no doubt for the purpose of deluding Dora—he must have stolen down again and made off without being either seen or heard by anybody. Even the policeman on duty in Market Place had noticed nothing. He had taken what was practically the only money left them in the world—about twenty pounds—from Dora's cashbox, and some clothes, packing these last in a knapsack which still remained to him from the foreign tramps of years before.

The efforts made by Dora, David, and Ancrum, whom David called in to help, to track the fugitive, were quite useless. Daddy had probably disguised himself, for he had all the tricks of the adventurer, and could 'make up' in former days so as to deceive even his own wife.

Strange outbreak of a secret ineradicable instinct! He had been Dora's for twenty years. But life with her at Leicester, and during their first years at Manchester, had thriven too evenly, and in the end the old wanderer had felt his blood prick within him, and the mania of his youth revive. His business had grown hateful to him; it was probably the comparative monotony of success which had first reawakened the travel-hunger—then restlessness, conflict, leading to drink, and, finally, escape.

'He will come back, you know,' said Dora one night, sharply, to David. 'He served my mother so many times. But he always came back.'

They were sitting together in the shuttered and dismantled restaurant. There was to be a sale on the premises on the morrow, and the lower room had that day been filled with all the 'plant' of the restaurant, and all or almost all the poor household stuff from upstairs. It was an odd, ramshackle collection; and poor Dora, who had been walking round looking at the auction tickets, was realising with a sinking heart how much debt the sale would still leave unprovided for. But she had found friends. Father Vernon had met the creditors for her. There had been a composition, and she had insisted upon working off to the best of her power whatever sum might remain after the possession and goodwill had been sold. She could live on a crust, and she was sure of continuous work both for the great church-furniture shop in Manchester which had hitherto employed her and also for the newly established School of Art Needlework at Kensington. As an embroideress there were few more delicately trained eyes and defter hands than hers in England.

When she spoke of her father's coming back, David was seized with pity. She could not sit down in these days when her work was out of her hands. Perpetual movement seemed her only

relief. The face, that seemed so featureless but was so expressive, had lost its sweet, shining look; the mouth had the pucker of pain; and she had piteous startled ways quite unlike her usual soft serenity.

'Oh, yes, he will come back—some time,' he said, to comfort her.

'I don't doubt that—never. But I wonder how he could go like that—how he had the heart! I did think he cared for me. I wasn't ever nasty to him—at least, I don't remember. Perhaps he thought I was. But only we two—and always together—since mother died!'

She began to tidy some of the lots, to tie some of the bundles of odds and ends together more securely—talking all the while in a broken way. She was evidently bewildered and at sea. If she could have remembered any misconduct of her own, it seemed to David, it would have been a relief to her. Her faith taught her that love was all-powerful—but it had availed her nothing!

The sale came; and the goodwill of the Parlour was sold to a man who was to make a solid success of what with Daddy had been a half-crazy experiment.

Dora went to live in Ancoats, that teeming, squalid quarter which lies but a stone's-throw from the principal thoroughfares and buildings of Manchester, and in its varieties of manufacturing life and population presents types which are all its own. Here are the cotton operatives who work the small proportion of mills still remaining within the bounds of Manchester—the spinners, minders, reelers, reed-makers, and the rest; here are the calico-printers and dyers, the warehousemen and lurrymen; and here too are the sellers of 'fents,' and all the other thousand and one small trades and occupations which live on and by the poor. The quarter has one broad thoroughfare or lung, which on a sunny day is gay, sightly, and alive; then to north and south diverge the innumerable low red-brick streets where the poor live and work; which have none, however, of the trim uniformity which belongs to the workers' quarters of the factory towns pure and simple. Manchester in its worst streets is more squalid, more haphazard, more nakedly poor even than London. Yet, for all that, Manchester is a city with a common life, which London is not. The native Lancashire element, lost as it is beneath many supervening strata, is still there and powerful; and there are strong well-defined characteristic interests and occupations which bind the whole together.

Here Dora settled with a St. Damian's girl friend, a shirt-maker. They lived over a sweetshop, in two tiny rooms, in a street even more miscellaneous and half-baked than its neighbours. Outside was ugliness; inside, unremitting labour. But Dora soon made herself almost happy. By various tender shifts she had saved out of the wreck in Market Place Daddy's bits of engravings and foreign curiosities, his Swiss carvings and shells, his skins and stuffed birds; very moth-eaten and melancholy

these last, but still safe. There, too, was his chair; it stood beside the fire; he had but to come back to it. Many a time in the week did she suddenly rise that she might go to the door and listen; or crane her head out of window, agitated by a figure, a sound, as her mother had done before her.

Then her religious life was free to expand as it had never been yet. Very soon, in Passion Week, she and her friend had gathered a prayer-meeting of girls, hands from the mill at the end of the street. They came for twenty minutes in the dinner-hour, delicate-faced comely creatures many of them, with their shawls over their heads: Dora prayed and sang with them, a soft tremulous passion in every word and gesture. They thought her a saint—began to tell her their woes and their sins. In the evenings and on Sunday she lived in the coloured and scented church, with its plaintive music, its luminous altar, its suggestions both of a great encompassing church order of undefined antiquity and infinite future, and of a practical system full of support for individual weakness and guidance for the individual will. The beauty of the ceremonial appealed to those instincts in her which found other expression in her glowing embroideries; and towards the church order, with its symbols, observances, mysteries, the now solitary girl felt a more passionate adoration, a more profound humility, than ever before. Nothing too much could be asked of her. During Lent, but for the counsels of Father Russell himself, a shrewd man, well aware that St. Damian's represented the one Anglican oasis in an incorrigibly moderate Manchester, even her serviceable and elastic strength would have given way, so hard she was to that poor 'sister the body,' which so many patient ages have gone to perfect and adjust.

Half of the romance, the poetry of her life, lay here; the other half in her constant expectation of her father, and in the visits of David Grieve. Once a week at least David mounted to the little room where the two girls sat working; sometimes now, oh joy! he went to church with her; sometimes he made her come out to Eccles, or Cheadle, or the Irwell valley for a walk. She used various maidenly arts and self-restraints to prevent scandal. At home she never saw him alone, and she now never went to Potter Street. Still, out of doors they were often alone. There was no concealment, and the persons who took notice assumed that they were keeping company and going to be married. When such things were said to Dora she met them with a sweet and quiet denial, at first blushing, then with no change at all of look or manner.

Yet the girl who lived with her knew that the first sound of David's rap on the door below sent a tremor through the figure beside her, that the slight hand would go up instinctively to the coiled hair, straightening and pinning, and that the smiling, listening, sometimes disputing Dora who talked with David Grieve was quite different from the dreamy and ascetic Dora who sat beside her all day.

Why did David go? As a matter of fact, with every month of this winter and spring, Dora's friendship became more necessary to him. All the brotherly feeling he would once so willingly have spent on Louie, he now spent on Dora. She became in truth a sister to him. He talked to her as he would have done to Louie had she been like Dora. No other relationship ever entered his mind; and he believed that he was perfectly understood and met in the same way.

Both often spoke of Lucy, towards whom David in this new and graver temper felt both kindly and gratefully. She, poor child, wrote to Dora from time to time letters full of complaints of her father and of his tyranny in keeping her away from Manchester. He indeed seemed to have taken a morbid dislike to his daughter, and what company he wanted he got from the widow, whom yet he had never made up his mind to marry. Lucy chafed and rebelled against the perpetual obstacles he placed in the way of her returning home, but he threatened to make her earn her own living if she disobeyed him, and in the end she always submitted. She poured herself out bitterly, however, to Dora, and Dora was helplessly sorry for her, feeling that her idle wandering life with the various aunts and cousins she boarded with was excessively bad for her—seeing that Lucy was not of the stuff to fashion new duties or charities for herself out of new relations—and that the small, vain, and yet affectionate nature ran an evil chance of ultimate barrenness and sourness.

But what could she do? In every letter there was some mention of David Grieve or request for news about him. About the visit to Paris Dora had written discreetly, telling only what she knew, and nothing of what she guessed. In reality, as the winter passed on, Dora watched him more and more closely, waiting for the time when that French mystery, whatever it was, should have ceased to overshadow him, and she might once more scheme for Lucy. He must marry—that she knew!—whatever he might think. Anyone could see that, with the returning spring, in spite of her friendship and Ancrum's, he felt his loneliness almost intolerable. It was clear, too, as his manhood advanced, that he was naturally drawn to women, naturally dependent on them. In spite of his great intelligence, to her so formidable and mysterious, Dora had soon recognised, as Elise had done, the eager, clinging, confiding temper of his youth. And beneath the transformation of passion and grief it was still there—to be felt moving often like a wounded thing.

#### CHAPTER XV

It was a showery April evening. But as it was also a Saturday, Manchester took no heed at all of the weather. The streets were thronged. All the markets were ablaze with light, and full of buyers. In Market Place, Dora's old home, the covered glass booths beside the pavement brought the magic of the spring into

the very heart of the black and swarming town, for they were a fragrant show of daffodils, hyacinths, primroses, and palms. Their lights shone out into the rainy mist of the air, on the glistening pavements, and on the faces of the cheerful chattering crowd, to which the shawled heads so common among the women gave the characteristic Lancashire touch. Above rose the dark tower of the Exchange; on one side was the Parlour, still dedicated to the kindly diet of corn- and fruit-eating men, but repainted, and launched on a fresh career of success by Daddy's successor; on the other, the gabled and bulging mass of the old Fishing-tackle House, with a lively fish and oyster traffic surging in the little alleys on either side of it.

Market Street, too, was thronged. In the great cheap shop at the head of it, aflame with lights from top to base, you could see the buyers story after story, swarming like bees in a glass hive. Farther on in the wide space of the Infirmary square, the omnibuses gathered, and a detachment of redcoats just returned from rifle-practice on the moors crowded the pavement outside the hospital, amid an admiring escort of the youth of Manchester, while their band played lustily.

But especially in Peter Street, the street of the great public halls and principal theatres, was Manchester alive and busy. Nilsson was singing at the 'Royal,' and the rich folk were setting down there in their broughams and landaus. But in the great Free Trade Hall there was a performance of 'Judas Maccabeus' given by the Manchester Philharmonic Society, and the vast place, filled from end to end with shilling and two-shilling seats, was crowded with the 'people.' It was a purely local scene, unlike anything of the same kind in London, or any other capital. The performers on the platform were well known to Manchester, unknown elsewhere; Manchester took them at once critically and affectionately, remembering their past, looking forward to their future; the Society was one of which the town was proud; the conductor was a character, and popular; and half the audience at least was composed of the relations and friends of the chorus. Most people had a 'Susan,' an 'Alice,' or a 'William' making signs to them at intervals from the orchestra; and when anything went particularly well, and the applause was loud, the friends of Susan or Alice beamed with a proprietary pride.

Looking down upon this friendly cheerful throng sat David Grieve, high up in the balcony. It had been his wont of late to frequent these cheap concerts, where as a rule, owing to the greater musical sensitiveness of the English North as compared with the South, the music is singularly good. During the past winter, indeed, music might almost be said to have become part of his life. He had no true musical gift, but in the paralysis of many of his natural modes of expression which had overtaken him music supplied a need. In it he at least, and at this moment, found a voice and an emotion not too personal or poignant. He lost himself in it, and was soothed.