

Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.

BOOK IV  
*MATURITY*

Handwritten mark or signature.

## CHAPTER I

'DADDY!' said a little voice.

The owner of it, a child of four, had pushed open a glass door, and was craning his curly head through it towards a garden that lay beyond.

'Yes, you rascal, what do you want now?'

'Daddy, come here!'

The voice had a certain quick stealthiness, through which, however, a little tremor of apprehension might be detected.

David Grieve, who was smoking and reading in the garden, came up to where his small son stood, and surveyed him.

'Sandy, you've been getting into mischief.'

The child laid hold of his father, dragged him into the little hall, and towards the dining-room door. Arrived there, he stopped, put a finger to his lip, and laid his head plaintively on one side.

'Zere's an awful sight in zere, Daddy.'

'You monkey, what have you been up to?'

David opened the door. Sandy first hung back, then, in a sudden enthusiasm, ran in, and pointed a thumb pink with much sucking at the still uncleared dinner-table, which David and the child's mother had left half an hour before.

'Zere's a pie!' he said, exultantly.

And a pie there was. First, all the salt-cellars had been upset into the middle of the table, then the bits of bread left beside the plates had been crumbled in, then—the joys of wickedness growing—the mustard-pot had been emptied over the heap, some bananas had been stuck unsteadily here and there to give it feature, and finally, in a last orgie of crime, a cruet of vinegar had been discharged on the whole, and the brown streams were now meandering across the clean tablecloth.

'Sandy, you little wretch!' cried his father, 'don't you know that you have been told again and again not to touch the things on the table? Hold out your hand!'

Sandy held out a small paw, whimpered beforehand, but never ceased all the time to watch his father with eyes which seemed to be quietly on the watch for experiences.

David administered two smart pats, then rang the bell for the housemaid. Sandy stationed himself on the rug opposite his father, and looked at his reddened hand, considering.

'I don't seem to mind much, Daddy!' he said at last, looking up.

'No, sir. Daddy'll have to try and find something that you will mind.'

The tone was severe, and David did his best to frown. In reality his eyes, under the frown, devoured his small son, and he had some difficulty in restraining himself from kissing the hand he had just slapped.

When the housemaid entered, however, she showed a temper which would clearly have slapped Master Sandy without the smallest compunction.

The little fellow stood and listened to her laments and denunciations with the same grave considering eyes, slipped his hand inside his father's for protection, watched, like one enchained, the gradual demolition of the pie, and when it was all gone, and the tablecloth removed, he gave a long sigh of relief.

'Say you're sorry, sir, to Jane, for giving her so much extra trouble,' commanded his father.

'I'm soddy, Jane,' said the child, nodding to her; 'but it was a p—*wecious* pie, wasn't it?'

The mixture of humour and candour in his baby eye was irresistible. Even Jane laughed, and David took him up and swung him on to his shoulder.

'Come out, young man, into the garden, where I can keep an eye on you. Oh! by the way, are you all right again?'

This inquiry was uttered as they reached the garden seat, and David perched the child on his knee.

'Yes, I'm *bet-ter*,' said the child slowly, evidently unwilling to relinquish the dignity of illness all in a moment.

'Well, what was the matter with you that you gave poor mammy such a bad night?'

The child was silent a moment, pondering how to express himself.

'I was—I was a little sick outside, and a little *feelish* inside'—he wavered on the difficult word. 'Mammy said I had the wrong dinner yesterday at Aunt Dora's. Zere was plums—*lots* o' plums!' said the child, clasping his hands on his knee, and hunching himself up in a sudden ecstasy.

'Well, don't go and have the wrong dinner again at Aunt Dora's. I must tell her to give you nothing but rice pudding.'

'Zen I shan't go zere any more,' said the child with determination.

'What, you love plums more than Aunt Dora?'

'No—o,' said Sandy dubiously, 'but plums *is* good!'

And, with a sigh of reminiscence, he threw himself back in his father's arm, being, in fact, tired after his bad night and the further excitement of the 'pie.' The thumb slipped into the pink mouth, and with the other hand the child began dreamily to pull at one of his fair curls. The attitude meant going to sleep, and David had, in fact, hardly settled him, and drawn a light overcoat which lay near over his small legs, before the fringed eyelids sank.

David held him tenderly, delighting in the weight, the warmth, the soft even breath of his sleeping son. He managed somehow

to relight his pipe, and then sat on, dreamily content, enjoying the warm September sunshine, and letting the book he had brought out lie unopened.

The garden in which he sat was an oblong piece of ground, with a central grass plat and some starved and meagre borders on either hand. The gravel in the paths had blackened, so had the leaves of the privets and the lilacs, so also had the red-brick walls of the low homely house closing up the other end of the garden. Seventy years ago this house had stood pleasantly amid fields on the northern side of Manchester; its shrubs had been luxuriant, its roses unstained. Now on every side new houses in oblong gardens had sprung up, and the hideous smoke plague of Manchester had descended on the whole district, withering and destroying.

Yet David had a great affection for his house, and it deserved it. It had been built in the days when there was more elbow-room in the world than now. The three sitting-rooms on the ground floor opened sociably into each other, and were pleasantly spacious, and the one story of bedrooms above contained, at any rate in the eyes of the tenants of the house, a surprising amount of accommodation. When all was said, however, it remained, no doubt, a very modest dwelling, at a rent of somewhere about ninety pounds a year; but as David sat contemplating it this afternoon, there rose in him again the astonishment with which he had first entered upon it, astonishment that he, David Grieve, should ever have been able to attain to it.

'Sandy! come here directly! Where are you, sir?'

David heard the voice calling in the hall, and raised his own.

'Lucy! all right!—he's here.'

The glass door opened, and Lucy came out. She was very smartly arrayed in a new blue dress which she had donned since dinner; yet her looks were cross and tired.

'Oh, David, how stupid! Why isn't the child dressed? Just look what an object! I sent Lizzie for him ten minutes ago, and she couldn't find him.'

'Then Lizzie has even less brains than I supposed,' said David composedly, 'seeing that she had only to look out of a back window. What are you going to do with him?'

'Take him out with me, of course. There are the Watsons of Fallowfield, they pestered me to bring him, and they're at home Saturdays. And aren't you coming too?'

'Madam, you are unreasonable!' said David, smiling, and putting down his pipe he laid an affectionate hand on his wife's arm. 'I went careering about the world with you last Saturday and the Saturday before, and this week end I must take for reading. There is an Oxford man who has been writing me infuriated letters this week because I won't let him know whether we will take up his pamphlet or no. I must get that read, and a good many other things, before to-morrow night.'

'Oh, I know!' said Lucy, pettishly. 'There's always some-

thing in the way of what I want. Soon I shan't see anything of you at all; it will be all business, and yet not a penny more to spend! Well, then, give me Sandy.'

David hesitated.

'Do you think you'll take him?' he said, bending over the little fellow. 'He doesn't look a bit himself to-day. It's those abominable plums of Dora's!'

He spoke with fierceness, as though Dora had been the veriest criminal.

'Well, but what nonsense!' cried Lucy; 'they don't upset other children. I can't think what's wrong with him.'

'He isn't like other children; he's of a finer make,' said David, laughing at his own folly, but more than half sincere in it all the same.

Lucy laughed too, and was appeased. She bent down to look at him, confessed that he was pale, and that she had better not take him lest there should be catastrophes.

'Well, then, I must go alone,' she said, turning away discontentedly. 'I don't know what's the good of it. Nobody cares to see me without him or you.'

The last sentence came out with a sudden energy, and as she looked back towards him he saw that her cheek was flushed.

'What, in that new gown?' he said, smiling, and looked her up and down approvingly.

Her expression brightened.

'Do you like it?' she said, more graciously.

'Very much. You look as young as when I first teased you! Come here and let me give you a "nip for new."'

She came docilely. He pretended to pinch the thin wrist she held out to him, and then, stooping, lightly kissed it.

'Now go and enjoy yourself,' he said, 'and I'll take care of Sandy. Don't tire yourself. Take a cab when you want one.'

She was moving away when a thought struck her.

'What are you going to say to Lord Driffield?'

A cloud crossed David's look. 'Well, what am I to say to him? You don't really want to go, Lucy?'

In an instant the angry look came back.

'Oh, very well!' she cried. 'If you're ashamed of me, and don't care to take me about with you, just say it, that's all!'

'As if I wanted to go myself!' he remonstrated. 'Why, I should be bored to death; so would you. I don't believe there would be a person in the house whom either of us would ever have seen before, except Lord Driffield. And I can see Lord Driffield, and his books too, in much more comfortable ways than by going to stay with him.'

Lucy stood silent a moment, trying to contain herself, then she broke out:

'That is just like you!' she said in a low bitter voice; 'you won't take any chance of getting on. It's always the way. People say to me that you're so clever—that you're thought so

much of in Manchester, you might be anything you like. And what's the good?—that's what I think! If you do earn more money you won't let us live any differently. It's always, can't we do without this? and can't we do without that? And as to knowing people, you won't take any trouble at all! Why can't we get on, and make new friends, and be—be—as good as anybody? other people do. I believe you think I should disgrace myself—I should put my knife in my mouth, or something, if you took me to Lord Driffield's. I can behave myself *perfectly*, thank you.'

And Lucy looked at her husband in a perfect storm of temper and resentment. Her prettiness had lost much of its first bloom; the cheek-bones, always too high, were now more prominent than in first youth, and the whole face had a restless thinness which robbed it of charm, save at certain rare moments of unusual moral or physical well-being. David, meeting his wife's sparkling eyes, felt a pang compounded of many mixed compunctions and misgivings.

'Look here, Lucy!' he said, laying down his pipe, and stretching out his free hand to her, 'don't say those things. They hurt me, and you don't mean them. Come and sit down a moment, and let's make up our minds about Lord Driffield.'

Unwillingly she let herself be drawn down beside him on the garden bench. These quarrels and reproaches were becoming a necessity and a pleasure to her. David felt, with a secret dread, that the habit of them had been growing upon her.

'I haven't done so very badly for you, have I?' he said affectionately, as she sat down, taking her two gloved hands in his one. Lucy vehemently drew them away.

'Oh, if you mean to say,' she cried, her eyes flaming, 'that I had no money, and ought just to be thankful for what I can get, just *say it*, that's all.'

This time David flushed.

'I think, perhaps, you'd better go and pay your calls,' he said, after a minute; 'we can talk about this letter some other time.'

Lucy sat silent, her chest heaving. As soon as ever in these little scenes between them he began to show resentment, she began to give way.

'I didn't mean that,' she said, uncertainly, in a low voice, looking ready to cry.

'Well, then, suppose you don't say it,' replied David, after a pause. 'If you'll try and believe it, Lucy, I don't want to go to Lord Driffield's simply and solely because I am sure we should neither of us enjoy it. Lady Driffield is a stuck-up sort of person, who only cares about her own set and relations. We should be patronised, we should find it difficult to be ourselves—there would be no profit for anybody. Lord Driffield would be too busy to look after us; besides, he has more power anywhere than in his own house.'

'No one could patronise you,' said Lucy, firing up again.

'I don't know,' said David, with a smile and a stretch; 'I'm shy—on other people's domains. If they'd come here I should know how to deal with them.'

Lucy was silent for a while, twisting her mouth discontentedly. David observed her. Suddenly he held out his hand to her again, relenting.

'Do you really want to go so much, Lucy?'

'Of course I do,' she said, pouting, in a quick injured tone. 'It's—it's a chance, and I want to see what it's like; and I should hardly have to buy anything new, unless it's a new bonnet, and I can make that myself.'

David sat considering.

'Well!' he said at last, trying to stifle his sigh, 'I don't mind. I'll write and accept.'

Lucy's eye gleamed. She edged closer to her husband.

'You won't mind very much? It's only two nights. Isn't Sandy cramping your arm?'

'Oh, we shall get through, I dare say. No—the boy's all right. I say'—with a groan—'shall I have to get a new dress suit?'

'Yes, of course,' said Lucy, with indignant eagerness.

'Well, then, if you don't go off, and let me earn some money, we shall be in the Bankruptcy Court. Good-bye! I shall take the boy into the study, and cover him up while I work.'

Lucy stood before him an instant, then stooped and kissed him on the forehead. She would have liked to say a penitent word or two, but there was still something hard and hot in her heart which prevented her. Yet her husband, as he sat there, seemed to her the handsomest and most desirable of men.

David nodded to her kindly, and sat watching her slim straight figure as she tripped away from him across the garden and disappeared into the house. Then he bent over Sandy and raised him in his arms.

'Don't wake, Sandy!' he said softly, as the little man half opened his eyes—'Daddy's going to put you to bye in the study.'

And he carried him in, the child breathing heavily against his shoulder, and deposited his bundle on an old horsehair sofa in the corner of his own room, turning the little face away from the light, and wrapping up the bare legs.

Then he sat down to his work. The room in which he sat was made for work. It was walled with plain deal bookcases, which were filled from floor to ceiling, largely with foreign books, as the paper covers testified.

For the rest, anyone looking round would have noticed a spacious writing-table in the window, a large and battered armchair beside the fire, a photograph of Lucy over the mantelpiece, oddly flanked by an engraving of Goethe and the head of the German historian Ranke, a folding cane chair which was generally used by Lucy whenever she visited the room, and the horsehair sofa, whereon Sandy was now sleeping amid a surrounding litter of

books and papers which only just left room for his small person. If there were other chairs and tables, they were covered deep in literature of one kind or another, and did not count. The large window looked on the garden, and the room opened at the back into the drawing-room, and at one side into the dining-room. On the rug slept the short-haired black collie, whom David had once protected from Louie's dislike—old, blind, and decrepit, but still beloved, especially by Sandy, and still capable of barking a toothless defiance at the outer world.

It was a room to charm a student's eyes, especially on this September afternoon with its veiled and sleepy sun stealing in from the garden, and David fell into his chair, refilled his pipe, and stretched out his hand for a batch of manuscript which lay on his table, with an unconscious sigh of satisfaction.

The manuscript represented a pamphlet on certain trade questions by a young Oxford economist. For the firm of Grieve & Co., of Manchester, had made itself widely known for some five years past to the intelligence of northern England by its large and increasing trade in pamphlets of a political, social, or economical kind. They supplied mechanics' institutes, political associations, and workmen's clubs; nay, more, they had a system of hawkers of their own, which bade fair to extend largely. To be taken up by Grieve & Co. was already an object to young politicians, inventors, or social reformers, who might wish for one reason or another to bring their names or their ideas before the working-class of the North. And Grieve & Co. meant David, sitting smoking and reading in his armchair.

He gave the production now in his hands some careful reading for half an hour or more, then he suddenly threw it down.

'Stuff and nonsense!' he said to himself. 'The man has got the facts about those Oldham mills wrong somehow, I'm certain of it. Where's that letter I had last week?' and, jumping up, he took a bunch of keys out of his pocket and opened a drawer in his writing-table. The drawer contained mostly bundles of letters, and to the right hand a number of loose ones recently received, and not yet sorted or tied. He looked through these, found what he wanted, and was about to close the drawer when his attention was caught by a thick black note-book lying towards the back of it. He took it out, reminded by it of something he had meant to do, and carried it off with the Oldham letter to his chair. Once settled there again, he turned himself to the confutation of his pamphleteer. But not for long. The black book on his knee exercised a disturbing influence; his under-mind began to occupy itself with it, and at last the Oldham letter was hastily put down, and, taking out a pocket pen, David, with a smile at his own delinquency, opened the black book, turned over many closely written pages, and settled down to write another.

The black book was his journal. He had kept it intermittently since his marriage, rather as a journal of thought than as a journal of events, and he had to add to it to-day some criti-

cisms of a recent book by Renan which had been simmering in his mind for a week or two. Still it contained a certain number of records of events, and, taken generally, its entries formed an epitome of everything of most import—practical, moral, or intellectual—which had entered into David Grieve's life during the eight years since his marriage.

For instance :—

'April 10, 1876.—Our son was born this morning between three and four o'clock, after more than three years of marriage, when both of us had begun to despair a little. Now that he is come, I am decidedly interested in him, but the paternal relation hardly begins at birth, as the mother's does. The father, who has suffered nothing, cannot shut his eyes to the physical ugliness and weakness, the clash of pain and effort, in which the future man begins; the mother, who has suffered everything, seems by a special spell of nature to feel nothing after the birth but the mystery and wonder of the *new creature*, the life born from her life—flesh of her flesh—breath of her breath. Else why is Lucy—who bears pain hardly, and had looked forward much less eagerly to the child, I think, than I had—so proud and content just to lie with the hungry creature beside her? while I am half inclined to say, What! so little for so much?—and to spend so full an energy in resenting the pains of maternity as an unmeaning blot on the scheme of things, that I have none left for a more genial emotion. Altogether, I am disappointed in myself as a father. I seem to have no imagination, and at present I would rather touch a loaded torpedo than my son.'

'April 30.—Lucy wishes to have the child christened at St. Damian's, and, though it goes against me, I have made no objection. And if she wishes it I shall go. It is not a question of one's own personal consistency or sincerity. The new individuality seems to me to have a claim in the matter, which I have no business to override because I happen to think in this way or that. My son when he grows up may be an ardent Christian. Then, if I had failed to comply with the national religious requirement, and had let him go unbaptized, because of my own beliefs or non-beliefs, he might, I think, rightly reproach me: "I was helpless, and you took advantage."

'Education is different. The duty of the parent to hand on what is best and truest in his own mind to the child is clear. Besides, the child goes on to carry what has been taught him into the open *agora* of the world's thought, and may there test its value as he pleases. But the omission, in a sense irreparable, of a definite and customary act like baptism from a child's existence, when hereafter the omission may cause him a pang quite disproportionate to any likes or dislikes of mine in the matter, appears to me unjust.

'I talk as if Lucy were not concerned!—or Dora! In reality I shall do as Lucy wills. Only they must not misunderstand me

for the future. If my son lives, his father will not hide his heart from him.

'I notice for the first time that Lucy is anxious and troubled about *her* father. She would like now to be friends, and she took care that the news of the child's birth should be conveyed to him at once through a common acquaintance. But he has taken no notice. In some natures the seeds of affection seem to fall only on the sand and rock of the heart, where because they have "no depth of earth they wither away;" while the seeds of hatred find the rich and good ground, where they spring and grow a hundred-fold.'

'December 8, 1877.—I have just been watching Sandy on the rug between the two dogs—Tim, and the most adorable black and tan *dachshund* that Lord Driffield has just given me. Sandy had a bit of biscuit, and was teasing his friends—first thrusting it under their noses, and then, just as they were preparing to gulp, drawing it back with a squeal of joy. The child's evident mastery and sense of humour, the grave puzzled faces of the dogs, delighted me. Then a whim seized me. I knelt down on the rug, and asked him to give me some. He held out the biscuit and laid it against my lips; I saw his eye waver; there was a gleam of mischief—the biscuit was half snatched away, and I felt absurdly chagrined. But in an instant the little face melted into the sweetest, keenest smile, and he almost choked me in his eagerness to thrust the biscuit down my throat. "Poor Daddy! Daddy so hungry."

'I recall with difficulty that I once thought him ugly and unattractive, poor little worm! On the contrary, it is quite clear that, whatever he may be when he grows up—I don't altogether trust his nose and mouth—for a child he is a beauty! His great brown eyes—so dark and noticeable beneath the fair hair in the little apple-blossom face—let you into the very heart of him. It is by no means a heart of unmixed goodness. There is a curious aloofness in his look sometimes, as of some pure intelligence beholding good and evil with the same even speculative mind. But this strange mood breaks up so humanly! he has such wiles—such soft wet kisses! such a little flute of a voice when he wants to coax or propitiate you!

'March 1878.—My printing business has been growing very largely lately. I have now worked out my profit-sharing scheme with some minuteness, and yesterday the men, John, and I had a conference. In part, my plan is copied from that of the "Maison Leclair," but I have worked a good deal of my own into it. Our English experience of this form of industrial partnership has been on the whole unfavourable; but, after a period of lassitude, experiments are beginning to revive. The great rock ahead lies in one's relation to the trade unions—one must remember that.

'To the practised eye the men to-day showed signs of

accepting it with cordiality, but the north-country man is before all things cautious, and I dare say a stranger would have thought them cool and suspicious. We meet again next week.

'I must explain the thing to Lucy—it is her right. She may resent it vehemently, as she did my refusal, in the autumn, to take advantage of that London opening. It will, of course, restrict our income just as it was beginning to expand quickly. I have left myself adequate superintendence wages, a bonus on these wages calculated in the same way as that of the men, a fixed percentage on the capital already employed in the business, and a nominal thirty per cent. of the profits. But I can see plainly that however the business extends, we—she and I—shall never "make our fortune" out of it. For beyond the fifty per cent. of the profits to be employed in bonuses on wages, and the twenty per cent. set aside for the benefit and pension society, my thirty per cent. must provide me with what I want for various purposes connected with the well-being of the workers, and for the widening of our operations on the publishing side, in a more or less propagandist spirit.

'My bookselling business proper is, of course, at present outside the scheme, and I do not see very well how anything of the kind can be applied to it. This will be a comfort to Lucy; and just now the trade both in old and foreign books is prosperous and brings me in large returns. But I cannot disguise from myself that the other experiment is likely to absorb more and more of my energies in the future. I have from sixty to eighty men now in the printing-office—a good set, take them altogether. They have been gradually learning to understand me and my projects. The story of what Leclair was able to do for the lives and characters of his men is wonderful!

'My poor little wife! I try to explain these things to her, but she thinks that I am merely making mad experiments with money, teaching workmen to be "uppish" and setting employers against me. When in my turn I do my best to get at what she means by "getting on," I find it comes to a bigger house, more servants, a carriage, dinner parties, and, generally, a move to London, bringing with it a totally new circle of acquaintance who need never know exactly what she or I rose from. She does not put all this into words, but I think I have given it accurately.

'And I should yield a great deal more than I do if I had any conviction that these things, when got, would make her happy. But every increase in our scale of living since we began has seemed rather to make her restless, and fill her with cravings which yet she can never satisfy. In reality she lives by her affections, as most women do. One day she wants to lose sight of everyone who knew her as Purcell's daughter, or me as Purcell's assistant; the next she is fretting to be reconciled to her father. In the same way, she thinks I am hard about money; she sees no attraction in the things which fill me with

enthusiasm; but at the same time, if I were dragged into a life where I was morally starved and discontented, she would suffer too. No, I must steer through—judge for her and myself—and make life as pleasant to her in little ways as it can be made.

'Ah! the gospel of "getting on"—it fills me with a kind of rage. There is an essential truth in it, no doubt, and if I had not been carried away by it at one time, I should have far less power over circumstances than I now have. But to square the whole of this mysterious complex life to it—to drop into the grave at last, having missed, because of it, all that sheds dignity and poetry on the human lot, all that makes it worth while or sane to hope in a destiny for man diviner and more lasting than appears—horrible!

'Yet Lucy may rightly complain of me. I get dreamy—I procrastinate. And it is unjust to expect that her ideal of social pleasure should be the same as mine. I ought to—and I will—make more effort to please her.'

'July 1878.—I am in Paris again. Yesterday afternoon I wandered about looking at those wrecks of the Commune which yet remain. The new Hôtel de Ville is rising, but the Tuileries still stands charred and ruined against the sky, an object lesson for Belleville. I walked up to the Arc de l'Etoile, and coming back I strolled into a little leafy open-air restaurant for a cup of coffee. Suddenly I recognised the place—the fountain—a large quicksilver ball—a little wooden pavilion festooned with coloured lamps. It was as though eight years were wiped away.

'I could not stay there. But the shock soon subsided. There is something bewildering, de-personalising, in the difference between one stage of life and another. In certain moods I feel scarcely a thread of identity between my present self and myself of eight years ago.

'This morning I have seen Louie, after an interval of three years. Montjoie keeps out of my way, and, as a matter of fact, I have never set eyes on him since I passed him close to the Auteuil station in July 1870. From Louie's account, he is now a confirmed drunkard, and can hardly ever be got to do any serious work. Yet she brought me a clay study of their little girl which he threw off in a lucid interval two or three months ago, surely as good as anybody or anything, astonishingly delicate and true. Just now, apparently, he has a bad fit on, and but for my allowance to her she tells me they would be all but destitute. It is remarkable to see how she has taken possession of this money and with what shrewdness she manages it. I suspect her of certain small Bourse speculations—she has all the financial slang on the tip of her tongue—but if so, they succeed. For she keeps herself and the child, scornfully allows him so much for his pocket in the week, and even, as I judge from the consideration she enjoys in the church she frequents, finds money for her own Catholic purposes.

'Louie a fervent Catholic and an affectionate mother! The mixture of old and new in her—the fresh habits of growth imposed on the original plant—startle me at every turn. Her Catholicism, which resolves itself, perhaps, into the cult of a particular church and of two or three admirable and sagacious priests, seems to me one long intrigue of a comparatively harmless kind. It provides her with enemies, allies, plots, battles, and surprises. It ministers, too, to her love of colour and magnificence—a love which implies an artistic sense, and would have been utilised young if she had belonged to an artistic family.

'But just as I am adapting myself to the new Louie the old reappears! She was talking to me yesterday of her exertions at Easter for the Easter decorations, and describing to me in superlatives the final splendour of the results, and the compliments which had been paid her by one or two of the clergy, when the name of a lady who seems to have been connected with the church longer than Louie has, and is evidently her rival in various matters of pious service and charitable organisation, came to her lips. Instantly her face flamed, and the denunciation she launched was quite in the old Clough End and Manchester vein. I was to understand that this person was a mean, designing, worthless creature, a hideous object besides, and "made up;" and as to her endeavours to ingratiate herself with Father this and Father that, the worst motives were hinted at.

'Another little incident struck me more painfully still. Her devotion to the little Cécile is astonishing. She is miserable when the child has a finger-ache, and seems to spend most of her time in dressing and showing her off. Yet I suspect she is often irritable and passionate even with Cécile; the child has a shrinking quiet way with her which is not natural. And to-day, when she was in the middle of cataloguing Montjoie's enormities, and I was trying to restrain her, remembering that Cécile was looking at a book on the other side of the room, she suddenly called to the child imperiously:

"Cécile! come here and tell your uncle what your father is!"

'And, to my horror, the little creature walked across to us, and, as though she were saying a lesson, began to *debiter* a set speech about her father's crimes and her mother's wrongs, containing the wildest abuse of her father, and prompted throughout by the excited and scarlet Louie. I tried to stop it; but Louie only pushed me away. The child rose to her part, became perfectly white, declaimed with a shrill fury, indescribably repulsive, and at the end sank into a chair, hardly able to stand. Then Louie covered her with kisses, made me get wine for her, and held her cradled in her arms till it was time for them to go.

'On the way downstairs, when Cécile was in front of us, I spoke my mind about this performance in the strongest way. But Louie only laughed at me. "It shall be quite plain that she is *mine* and not his! I don't run away from him; I keep

him from dying on the streets like a dog; but his child and everyone else shall know what he is."

'It is a tigress passion. Poor little child!—a thin, brown, large-eyed creature, with rather old, affected manners, and a small clinging hand.'

'July 4th.—Father Lenoir, Louie's director, has just been to call upon me; Louie insisted on my going to a festival service at St. Eulalie this morning, and introduced me to him—an elderly, courteous, noble-faced priest of a fine type. He was discreet, of course, and made me feel the enormous difference that exists between an outsider and a member of the one flock. But I gathered that the people among whom she is now thrown perfectly understand Louie. By means of the subtle and powerful discipline of the Church, a discipline which has absorbed the practical wisdom of generations, they have established a hold upon her. And they work on her also through the child. But he gave me to understand that there had been crises; that the opportunities for and temptations to dissolute living which beset Montjoie's wife were endless; and it was a marvel that under such circumstances a being so wild had yet kept straight.

'I shook him warmly by the hand at parting, and thanked him from my heart. He somewhat resented my thanks, I thought. They imported, perhaps, a personal element into what he regards as a matter of pure ecclesiastical practice and duty.'

'December 25th, 1878.—Lucy is still asleep; the rest of the house is just stirring. I am in my study looking out on the snowy garden and the frosted trees, which are as yet fair and white, though in a few hours the breath of Manchester will have polluted them.

'Last night I went with Lucy and Dora to the midnight service at St. Damian's. It pleased them that I went; and I thought the service, with its bells, its resonant *Adeste fideles*, and its white flowers, singularly beautiful and touching. And yet, in truth, I was only happy in it because I was so far removed from it; because the legend of Bethlehem and the mythology of the Trinity are no longer matters of particular interest or debate with me; because after a period of three-fourths assent, followed by one lasting over years of critical analysis and controversial reading, I have passed of late into a conception of Christianity far more positive, fruitful, and human than I have yet held. I would fain believe it the Christianity of the future. But the individual must beware lest he wrap his personal thinking in phrases too large for it.

'Yet, at least, one may say that it is a conception which has been gaining more and more hold on the minds of those who during the present century have thought most deeply, and laboured most disinterestedly in the field of Christian antiquity—who have sought with most learning and with fewest hindrances



from circumstance to understand Christianity, whether as a history or as a philosophy.

'I have read much German during the past year, and of late a book reviewing the whole course of religious thought in Germany since Schleiermacher, with a mixture of exhaustive information and brilliant style most unusual in a German, has absorbed all my spare hours. Such a movement!—such a wealth of collective labour and individual genius thrown into it—producing offshoots and echoes throughout the world, transforming opinion with the slow inevitableness which belongs to all science, possessing already a great past and sure of a great future.

'In the face of it, our orthodox public, the contented ignorance of our clergy, the solemn assurance of our religious press—what curious and amazing phenomena! Yet probably the two worlds have their analogues in every religion; and what the individual has to learn in these days at once of outward debate and of unifying social aspiration, is "to dissent no longer with the heat of a narrow antipathy, but with the quiet of a large sympathy."

## CHAPTER II

A FEW days after Lord Driffield's warm invitation to Mr. and Mrs. David Grieve to spend an October Saturday-to-Monday at Benet's Park had been accepted, Lucy was sitting in the September dusk putting some frills into Sandy's Sunday coat, when the door opened and Dora walked in.

'You do look done!' said Lucy, as she held up her cheek to her cousin's salutation. 'What have you been about?'

'They kept me late at the shop, for a Saturday,' said Dora, with a sigh of fatigue, 'and since then I've been decorating. It's the Dedication Festival to-morrow.'

'Well, the festivals don't do *you* any good,' said Lucy, emphatically; 'they always tire you to death. When you do get to church, I don't believe you can enjoy anything. Why don't you let other people have a turn now, after all these years? There's Miss Barham, and Charlotte Corfield, and Mrs. Willan—they'd all do a great deal more if you didn't do so much. I know that.'

Lucy's cool bright eye meant, indeed, that she had heard some remarks made of late with regard to Dora's position at St. Damian's somewhat unfavourable to her cousin. It was said that she was jealous of co-operation or interference on the part of new members of the congregation in the various tasks she had been accustomed for years past to lay upon herself in connection with the church. She was universally held to be extraordinarily good; but both in the large shop, where she was now forewoman, and at St. Damian's, people were rather afraid of her, and

inclined to head oppositions to her. A certain severity had grown upon her; she was more self-confident, though it was a self-confidence grounded always on the authority of the Church; and some parts of the nature which at twenty had been still soft and plastic were now tending to rigidity.

At Lucy's words she flushed a little.

'How can they know as well as I what has to be done?' she said with energy. 'The chancel screen is *beautiful*, Lucy—all yellow fern and heather. You must go to-morrow, and take Sandy.'

As she spoke she threw off her waterproof and unloosed the strings of her black bonnet. Her dark serge dress with its white turn-down collar and armlets—worn these last for the sake of her embroidery work—gave her a dedicated conventual look. She was paler than of old; the eyes, though beautiful and luminous, were no longer young, and lines were fast deepening in the cheeks and chin, with their round childish moulding. What had been *natveté* and tremulous sweetness at twenty, was now conscious strength and patience. The countenance had been fashioned—and fashioned nobly—by life; but the tool had cut deep, and had not spared the first grace of the woman in developing the saint. The hands especially, the long thin hands defaced by the labour of years, which met yours in a grasp so full of purpose and feeling, told a story and symbolised a character.

'David won't come,' said Lucy, in answer to Dora's last remark; 'he hardly ever goes anywhere now unless he hears of some one going to preach that he thinks he'll like.'

'No—I know,' said Dora. A shade came over her face. The attitude of David Grieve towards religion during the last four or five years represented to her the deep disappointment of certain eager hopes, perhaps one might almost call them ambitions, of her missionary youth. The disappointment had brought a certain bitterness with it, though for long years she had been sister and closest friend to both David and his wife. And it had made her doubly sensitive with regard to Lucy, whom she had herself brought over from the Baptist communion to the Church, and Sandy, who was her godchild.

After a pause, she hesitatingly brought a small paper book out of the handbag she carried.

'I brought you this, Lucy. Father Russell sent it you. He thinks it the best beginning book you can have. He always gives it in the parish; and if the mothers will only use it, it makes it so much easier to teach the children when they come to Sunday school.'

Lucy took it doubtfully. It was called 'The Mother's Catechism'; and, opening it, she saw that it contained a series of questions and answers, as between a mother and a child.

'I don't think Sandy would understand it,' she said, slowly, as she turned it over.

'Oh yes, he would!' said Dora, eagerly. 'Why, he's nearly