

Twelve hours after the arrival of Louie's letter, Dora tore herself from Lucy. 'Don't say good-bye,' said David, his face working, and to spare him and Lucy she went as though she were just going across the road for the night. David saw her—a white and silent traveller—into the car that was to take her on the first stage of a journey which, apart from everything else, alarmed her provincial imagination. David's gratitude threw her into a mist of tears as she drove off. Surely, of all the self-devoted acts of Dora's life, this mission and this leave-taking were not the least!

Lucy heard the wheels roll away. A stony, momentary sense of desolation came over her as this one more strand was cut. But David came in, and the locked lips relaxed. It had been necessary to tell her the reason of Dora's departure. And in the course of the long June evening David gathered from the motion of her face that she wished to speak to him. He bent down to her, and she murmured:—

'Tell Louie I wished I'd been kinder—I pray God will let her keep Cécile. . . . She must come to Manchester again when I'm gone.'

The night-watch was divided between David and the nurse. At five o'clock in the summer morning—brilliant once more after storm and rain—he injected morphia into the poor wasted arm, and she took a few drops of brandy. Then, after a while, she seemed to sleep; and he, stretched on a sofa beside her, and confident of waking at the slightest sound, fell into a light doze.

Lucy woke when the sun was high, rather more than an hour later. Her eyes were teased by a chink in the curtain; she hardly knew what it was, but her dying sense shrank, and she vaguely thought of calling David. But as she lay, propped up, she looked down on him, and she saw his pale, sunken face, with the momentary softening of rest upon it. And there wandered through her mind fragments of his sayings to her in that last evening of theirs together in the Manchester house,—especially, '*It can only be proved by living—by every victory over the evil self.*' In its mortal fatigue her memory soon lost hold of words and ideas; but she had the strength not to wake him.

Then as she lay in what seemed to her this scorching light—in reality it was one little ray which had evaded the thick curtains—a flood of joy seemed to pour into her soul. 'I shall not live beyond to-day,' she thought, 'but I know now I shall see him again.'

When at last she made a faint movement, and he woke at once, he saw that the end was very near. He thought of Dora in Paris with a pang, but there was no help for it. Through that day he never stirred from her side in the darkened room, and she sank fast. She spoke only one connected sentence—to say with great difficulty, 'Dying is long—but—not—painful.' The words woke in him a strange echo; they had been among the last words

of 'Lias, his childhood's friend. But she breathed one or two names—the landlady of the lodging-house, and the servants, especially the nurse.

They came in on tiptoe and kissed her. She had already thanked each one.

Sandy was just going to bed, when David carried him in to her. One of her last conscious looks was for him. He was in his nightgown, with bare feet, holding his father tight round the neck, and whimpering. They bent down to her, and he kissed her on the cheek, as David told him, 'very softly.' Then he cried to go away from this still, grey mother. David gave him to the nurse and came back.

The day passed, and the night began. The doctor in his evening visit said it would be a marvel if she saw the morrow. David sat beside the bed, his head bowed on the hand he held; the nurse was in the farther corner. His whole life and hers passed before him; and in his mind there hovered perpetually the image of the potter and the wheel. He and she—the Hand so unfaltering, so divine had bound them there, through resistance and anguish unspeakable. And now, for him there was only a sense of absolute surrender and submission, which in this hour of agony and exaltation rose steadily into the ecstasy—ay, the *vision* of faith! In the pitying love which had absorbed his being he had known that 'best' at last whereat his craving youth had grasped; and losing himself wholly had found his God.

And for her, had not her weak life become one flame of love—a cup of the Holy Grail, beating and pulsing with the Divine Life?

The dawn came. She pulled restlessly at her white wrapper—seemed to be in pain—whispered something of 'a weight.' Then the last change came over her. She opened her eyes—but they saw no longer. Nature ceased to resist, and the soul had long since yielded itself. With a meekness and piteousness of look not to be told, never to be forgotten, Lucy Grieve passed away.

#### CHAPTER X

'THE very day after Lucy had been carried to her last rest in that most poetic of all graveyards which bends its grassy shape to the encircling Rotha and holds in trust the ashes of Wordsworth, David Grieve started for Paris.

He had that morning received a telegram from Dora: 'Louie disappeared. Have no clue. Can you come?' Two days before, the news of Cécile's death from diphtheria had reached him in a letter from poor Dora, rendered almost inarticulate by her grief for Lucy and bitter regret for her own absence from her cousin's deathbed, mingling with her pity for Louie's unfortunate child and her dread and panic with regard to Louie herself.

But so long as that white form lay shrouded in the cottage upper room, he could not move—and he could scarcely feel.



The telegram broke in upon a sort of lethargy which had held him ever since Lucy's last breath. He started at once. On the way he spent two hours at Manchester. On the table in his study there still lay the medical book he had taken down from his scientific shelf on the night of Dr. Mildmay's visit; in Lucy's room her dresses hung as she had left them on the doors; a red woollen cap she had been knitting for Sandy was thrown down half finished on the dressing-table. Of the hour he spent in that room, putting away some of the little personal possessions, still warm as it were from her touch, let no more be said.

When he reached Paris he inquired for Dora at the *pension* in the Avenue Friedland, to which he had sent her. John, who had also written to him, and was still in Paris, was staying, he knew, at an hotel on the Quai Voltaire. But he went to Dora first.

Dora, however, was not at home. She had left for him the full address of the house in the Paris *banlieue* where she had found Louie, and full directions as to how to reach it. He took one of the open cabs and drove thither in the blazing July sun.

An interminable drive!—the whole length of the Avenue de la Grande-Armée and the Avenue de Neuilly, past the Seine and the Rond Pont de Courbevoie, until at last turning to the left into the wide and villainously paved road that leads to Rueil, Bougival, and St. Germain, the driver and David between them with difficulty discovered a side street which answered to the name Dora had several times given.

They had reached one of the most squalid parts of the western *banlieue*. Houses half built and deserted in the middle, perhaps by some bankrupt builder; small traders, bakers, *charcutiers*, fried-fish sellers, lodged in structures of lath and plaster, just run up and already crumbling; *cabarets* of the roughest and meanest kind, adorned with high-sounding devices,—David mechanically noticed one which had blazoned on its stained and peeling front, *A la renaissance du Phénix*;—heaps of rubbish and garbage with sickly children playing among them; here and there some small, ill-smelling factory; a few melancholy shrubs in new-made gardens, drooping and festering under a cruel sun in a scorched and unclean soil:—the place repelled and outraged every sense. Was it here that little Cécile had passed from a life of pain to a death of torture?

He rang at a sinister and all but windowless house, which he was able to identify from Dora's directions. John opened to him, and in a little room to the right, which looked on to a rank bit of neglected garden, he found Dora. A woman, with a scowling brow and greedy mouth, disappeared into the back premises as he entered.

Dora and he clasped hands. Then the sight of his face broke down even her long-practised self-control, and she laid her head down on the table and sobbed. But he showed little emotion; while John, standing shyly on the other side of the room, and the weeping Dora could hardly find words to tell their own story, so

overwhelmed were they by those indelible signs upon him of all that he had gone through.

He asked them rapidly a number of questions.

In the first place Dora explained that she and John were engaged in putting together whatever poor possessions the house contained of a personal kind, that they might not either be seized for debt, or fall into the claws of the old *bonne*, a woman of the lowest type, who had already plundered all she could. As to the wretched husband, very little information was forthcoming. John believed that he had been removed to the hospital in a state of alcoholic paralysis the very week that Cécile was taken ill; at any rate he had made no sign.

The rest of the story which Dora had to tell may be supplemented by a few details which were either unknown to his informants, or remained unknown to David.

Louie, on her return to Paris with David's hundred pounds, had promptly staked the greater part of it in certain Bourse speculations. She was quite as sorely in need of money as she had professed to be while in Manchester, but for more reasons than one, as David had uncomfortably suspected. Not only did her husband strip her of anything he could lay hands on, but a certain fair-haired Alsatian artist a good deal younger than herself had for some months been preying upon her. What his hold upon her precisely was, Father Lenoir, her director, when David went to see him, either could not or—because the matter was covered by the confessional seal—would not say. The artist, Brénart by name, was a handsome youth, with a droll facile tongue, and a recklessness of temper matching her own. He became first known to her as one of her husband's drinking companions, then, dazzled by the wife's mad beauty, he began to haunt the handsome Madame Montjoie, as many other persons had haunted her before him,—with no particular results except to increase the arrogant self-complacency with which Louie bore herself among her Catholic friends.

In the first year of his passion, Brénart came into a small inheritance, much of which he spent on jewellery and other presents for his idol. She accepted them without scruple, and his hopes naturally rose high. But in a few months he ran through his money, his drinking habits, under Montjoie's lead, grew upon him, and he fell rapidly into a state of degradation which would have made it very easy for Louie to shake him off, had she been so minded.

But by this time he had, no doubt, a curious spell for her. He was a person of considerable gifts, an etcher of fantastic promise, a clever musician, and the owner of a humorous *carillon* of talk, to quote M. Renan's word, which made life in his neighbourhood perpetually amusing for those, at any rate, who took the grossness of its themes as a matter of course. Louie found on the one hand that she could not do without him, in her miserable existence; on the other that if he was not to starve she must



keep him. His misfortunes revealed the fact that there was neither chivalry nor delicacy in him; and he learnt to live upon her with surprising quickness, and on the most romantic pretexts.

So she made her pilgrimage to Manchester for money, and then she played with her money to make it more, on the Bourse. But clever as she was, luck was against her, and she lost. Her losses made her desperate. So too did the behaviour of her husband, who robbed her whenever he could, and spent most of his time on the pavements of Paris, dragging himself from one low drinking-shop to another, only coming home to cheat her out of fresh supplies, and goad his wife to hideous scenes of quarrel and violence, which frightened the life out of Cécile. Brénart, whom she could no longer subsidise, kept aloof, for mixed reasons of his own. And the landlord, not to be trifled with any longer, gave them summary notice of eviction.

While she was in these straits, Father Lenoir, who even during these months of vacillating passion and temptation had exercised a certain influence over her, came to call upon her one afternoon, being made anxious by her absence from Ste. Eulalie. He found a wild-eyed haggard woman in a half-dismantled apartment, whom, for the first time, he could not affect by any of those arts of persuasion or rebuke, in which his long experience as a guide of souls had trained him. She would tell him nothing either about her plans, or her husband; she did not respond to his skilful and reproachful comments upon her failure to give them assistance in a recent great function at Ste. Eulalie; nor was she moved by the tone of solemn and fatherly exhortation into which he gradually passed. He left her, fearing the worst.

On the following morning she fled to the wretched house on the outskirts of Paris where Dora had found her. She went thither to escape from her husband; to avoid the landlord's pursuit; to cut herself adrift from the clergy of Ste. Eulalie, and to concert with Brénart a new plan of life. But Brénart failed to meet her there, and, a very few days after the flight, Cécile, already worn to a shadow, sickened with diphtheria. Either the seeds were already in her when they left Paris, or she was poisoned by the half-finished drainage and general insanitary state of the quarter to which they had removed.

From the moment the child took to her bed, Louie fell into the blackest despair. She had often ill-used her daughter during these last months; the trembling child, always in the house, had again and again been made the scapegoat of her mother's miseries; but she no sooner threatened to die than Louie threw everything else in the world aside and was madly determined she should live.

She got a doctor, of an inferior sort, from the neighbourhood, and when he seemed to her to bungle, and the child got no better, she drove him out of the house with contumely. Then she herself tried to caustic Cécile's throat, or she applied some of the old-wives' remedies, suggested by the low servant she had taken. The

result was that the poor little victim was brought to the edge of the grave, and Louie, reduced to abjectness, went and humbled herself to the doctor and brought him back. This time he told her bluntly that the child was dying and nothing could save her. Then, in her extremity, she telegraphed to David. Her brother had written to her twice since the beginning of Lucy's illness; but when she sent her telegram, all remembrance of her sister-in-law had vanished from Louie's mind—Lucy might never have existed; and whether she was alive or dead mattered nothing.

When Dora came, she found the child speechless, and near the end. Tracheotomy had been performed, but its failure was already clear. It seemed a question of hours. John went off post-haste for a famous doctor. The great man came, agreed with the local practitioner that nothing more could be done, and that death was imminent. Louie, beside herself, first turned and rent him, and then fell in a dead faint beside Cécile's bed. While the nurse, whom John had also brought from Paris, was tending both mother and daughter, Dora sent John—who in these years had acquired a certain smattering of foreign languages under the pressure of printing-room needs and David's counsel—to inquire for and fetch a priest. She was in an agony lest the child should die without the sacraments of her Church.

The priest came—a young man of a heavy peasant type—bearing the Host. Never did Dora forget that scene—the emaciated child gasping her life away, the strange people, dimly seen amid the wreaths of incense, who seemed to her to have flocked in from the street in the wake of the priest, to look—the sacred words and gestures in the midst, which, because of the quick unintelligible Latin, she could only follow as a mystery of ineffable and saving power, the same, so she believed, for Anglican and Catholic—and by the bedside the sullen erect form of the mother, who could not be induced to take any part whatever in the ceremony.

But when it was all over, and the little procession which had brought the Host was forming once more, Louie thrust Dora and the nurse violently away from the bed, and bent her ear down to Cécile's mouth. She gave a wild and hideous cry; then drawing herself to her full height, with a tragic magnificence of movement she stretched out one shaking hand over the poor little wasted body, while with the other she pointed to the priest in his white officiating dress.

'Go out of this house!—go this instant! Who brought you in? Not I! I tell you,—last night'—she flung the phrases out in fierce gasps—'I gave God the chance. I said to Him, Make Cécile well, and I'll behave myself—I'll listen to Father Lenoir. Much good I've got by it all this time!—but I will. I'll live on a crust, and I'll give all I can skin and scrape to those people at Ste. Eulalie. If not—then I'll go to the devil—to the devil! Do you hear? I swore that.'

Her voice sank to a hoarse whisper; she bent down, still keeping everyone at bay and at a distance from her dead child,—



though Dora ran to her—her head turned over her shoulder, her glowing eyes of hatred fixed upon the priest.

'She is mad!' he said to himself, receding quickly, lest the sacred burden he bore should suffer any indignity.

At that moment she fell heavily on her knees beside the bed insensible, her dark head lying on Cécile's arm. Dora, in a pale trance of terror, closed little Cécile's weary eyes, the nurse cleared the room, and they laid Louie on her bed.

When she revived, she crawled to the place where Cécile lay in her white grave-dress strewn with flowers, and again put everyone away, locking herself in with the body. But the rules of interment in the case of infectious diseases are strict in France; the authorities concerned intervened; and after scenes of indescribable misery and violence, the little corpse was carried away, and, thanks to Dora's and John's care, received tender and reverent burial.

The mother was too exhausted to resist any more. When Dora came back from the funeral, the nurse told her that Madame Montjoie, after having refused all meat or drink for two days, had roused herself from what seemed the state of stupor in which the departure of the funeral procession had left her, had asked for brandy, which had been given her, and had then, of her own accord, swallowed a couple of opium pills, which the doctor had so far vainly prescribed for her, and was now heavily asleep.

Dora went to her own bed, too tired to stand, yet inexpressibly relieved. Her bed was a heap of wraps contrived for her by the nurse on the floor of the lower room—a bare den, reeking of damp, which called itself the *salon*. But she had never rested anywhere with such helpless thankfulness. For some hours at least, agony and conflict were still, and she had a moment in which to weep for Lucy, the news of whose death had now lain for two days a dragging weight at her heart. Hateful memory!—she had forced her way in to Louie with the letter, thinking in her innocence that the knowledge of the brother's bereavement must touch the sister, or at least momentarily divert her attention: and Louie had dashed it down with the inconceivable words,—Dora's cheek burnt with anguish and shame, as she tried to put them out of her mind for ever,—

'Very well. Now, then, you can marry him! You know you've always wanted to!'

But at last that biting voice was hushed; there was not a sound in the house; the summer night descended gently on the wretched street, and in the midst of anxious discussion with herself as to how she and John were to get Louie to England, she fell asleep.

When Dora awoke, Louie was not in the house. After a few hours of opium-sleep, she must have noiselessly put together all her valuables and money, a few trifles belonging to Cécile, and a small parcel of clothes, and have then slipped out through the

garden door, and into a back lane or track, which would ultimately lead her down to the bank of the river. None of the three other persons sleeping in the house—Dora, the nurse, the old *bonne*, had heard a sound.

When John arrived in the morning, his practical common sense suggested a number of measures for Louie's pursuit, or for the discovery of her fate, should she have made away with herself, as he more than suspected—measures which were immediately taken by himself, or by the lawyer, Mr. O'Kelly.

Everything had so far been in vain. No trace of the fugitive—living or dead—could be found.

David, sitting with his arms on the deal table in the lower room, and his face in his hands, listened in almost absolute silence to the main facts of the story. When he looked up, it was to say, 'Have you been to Father Lenoir?'

No. Neither Dora nor John knew anything of Father Lenoir.

David went off at once. The good priest was deeply touched and overcome by the story, but not astonished. He first told David of the existence of Brénart, and search was instantly made for the artist. He, too, was missing, but the police, whose cordial assistance David, by the help of Lord Driffield's important friends in Paris, was able to secure, were confident of immediate discovery. Day after day passed, however; innumerable false clues were started; but at the end of some weeks Louie's fate was much of a secret as ever.

Dora and John had, of course, gone back to England directly after David's arrival; and he now felt that his child and his work called him. He returned home towards the middle of August, leaving the search for his sister in Mr. O'Kelly's hands.

For five months David remained doggedly at his work in Prince's Street. John watched him silently from day to day, showing him a quiet devotion which sometimes brought his old comrade's hand upon his shoulder in a quick touch of gratitude, or a flash to eyes heavy with broken sleep. The winter was a bad one for trade; the profits made by Grieve & Co., even on much business, were but small; and in the consultative council of employes which David had established the chairman constantly showed a dreaminess or an irritability in difficult circumstances which in earlier days would have cost him influence and success. But the men, who knew him well, looked at each other askance, and either spoke their minds or bore with him as seemed best. They were well aware that while wages everywhere else had been cut down, theirs were undiminished; that the profits from the second-hand book trade which remained nominally outside the profit-sharing partnership were practically all spent in furthering the social ends of it; and that the master, in his desolate house, with his two maid-servants, one of them his boy's nurse, lived as modestly as any of them, yet with help always to spare for the sick and the unfortunate. To a man they remained loyal to the



firm and the scheme; but among even the best of them there was a curious difference of opinion as to David and his ways. They profited by them, and they would see him through; but there was an uncomfortable feeling that, if such ideas were to spread, they might cut both ways and interfere too much with the easy living which the artisan likes and desires as much as any other man.

Meanwhile, those who have followed the history of David Grieve with any sympathy will not find it difficult to believe that this autumn and winter were with him a time of intense mental anguish and depression. The shock and tragedy of Louie's disappearance following on the prolonged nervous exhaustion caused by Lucy's struggle for life had brought him into a state similar to that in which his first young grief had left him; only with this difference, that the nature being now deeper and richer was but the more capable of suffering. The passion of religious faith which had carried him through Lucy's death had dwindled by natural reaction; he believed, but none the less he walked in darkness. The cruelty of his wife's fate, meditated upon through lonely and restless nights, tortured beyond bearing a soul made for pity; and every now and then wild fits of remorse for his original share in Louie's sins and misfortunes would descend upon him, and leave no access to reason.

His boy, his work, and his books, these were ultimately his protections from himself. Sandy climbed about him, or got into mischief with salutary frequency. The child slept beside his father at night, and in the evenings was always either watching for him at the gate or standing thumb in mouth with his face pressed against the window, and his bright eye scanning the dusk.

For the rest, after a first period of utter numbness and languor, David was once more able to read, and he read with voracity—science, philosophy, *belles lettres*. Two subjects, however, held his deepest mind all through, whatever might be added to them—the study of ethics, in their bearing upon religious conceptions, and the study of Christian origins. His thoughts about them found occasional outlet, either in his talks with Ancrum—whose love soothed him, and whose mind, with all its weaknesses and its strong Catholic drift, he had long found to be infinitely freer and more hospitable in the matter of ideas than the average Anglican mind—or in his journal.

A few last extracts from the journal may be given. It should be remembered that the southern element in him made such a mode of expression more easy and natural to him than it ever can be to most Englishmen.

'November 2nd.—It seems to me that last night was the first night since she died that I have not dreamt of her. As a rule, I am always with her in sleep, and for that reason I am the more covetous of the sleep which comes to me so hardly. It is a second life. Yet before her illness, during our married life, I hardly knew what it was to dream.

'Two nights ago I thought I was standing beside her. She

was lying on the long couch under the sycamore tree whither we used to carry her. At first, everything was wholly lifelike and familiar. Sandy was somewhere near. She had the grey camel's hair shawl over her shoulders, which I remember so well, and the white frilled cap drawn loosely together under her chin, over bandages and dressings, as usual. She asked me to fetch something for her from the house, and I went, full of joy. There seemed to be a strange mixed sense at the bottom of my heart that I had somehow lost her and found her again.

'When I came back, nurse was there, and everything was changed. Nurse looked at me with meaning, startled eyes, as much as to say, "Look closely, it is not as you think." And as I went up to her, lying still and even smiling on her couch, there was an imperceptible raising of her little white hand as though to keep me off. Then in a flash I saw that it was not my living Lucy; that it could only be her spirit. I felt an awful sense of separation and yet of yearning; sitting down on one of the mossy stones beside her, I wept bitterly, and so woke, bathed in tears.

'... It has often seemed to me lately that certain elements in the Resurrection stories may be originally traced to such experiences as these. I am irresistibly drawn to believe that the strange and mystic scene beside the lake, in the appendix chapter to the Gospel of St. John, arose in some such way. There is the same mixture of elements—of the familiar with the ghostly, the trivial with the passionate and exalted—which my own consciousness has so often trembled under in these last visionary months. The well-known lake, the old scene of fishers and fishing-boats, and on the shore the mysterious figure of the Master, the same, yet not the same, the little, vivid, dream-like details of the fire of coals, the broiled fish, and bread, the awe and longing of the disciples—it is borne in upon me with extraordinary conviction that the whole of it sprang, to begin with, from the dream of grief and exhaustion. Then, in an age which attached a peculiar and mystical importance to dreams, the beautiful thrilling fancy passed from mouth to mouth, became almost immediately history instead of dream,—just as here and there a parable misunderstood has taken the garb of an event,—was after a while added to and made more precise in the interest of apologetics, or of doctrine, or of the simple love of elaboration, and so at last found a final resting-place as an epilogue to the fourth Gospel.'

'November 4th.—To-night I have dared to read again Brown-ing's "Rabbi ben Ezra." For months I have not been able to read it, or think of it, though for days and weeks towards the end of her life it seemed to be graven on my heart.

Look not thou down, but up!

To uses of a cup,

The festal board, lamp's flash, and trumpet's pea,

The new wine's foaming glow,

The Master's lips a-glow!

Thou heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel?



'Let me think again, my God, of that astonishing ripening of her last days!—of all her little acts of love and gratitude towards me, towards her nurse, towards the people in the house, who had helped to tend her—of her marvellous submission, when once the black cloud of the fear of death, and the agony of parting from life had left her.

'And such facts alone in the world's economy are to have no meaning, point no-whither? I could as soon believe it as that, in the physical universe, the powers of the magnet, or the flash of the lightning, are isolated and meaningless—tell us nothing and lead nowhere.'

'November 10th.—In the old days—there is a passage of the kind in an earlier part of this journal—I was constantly troubled, and not for myself only, but for others, the poor and unlearned especially, who, as it seemed to me, would lose most in the crumbling of the Christian mythology—as to the intellectual difficulties of the approach to God. All this philosophical travail of two thousand years—and so many doubts and darkneses! A world athirst for preaching, and nothing simple or clear to preach—when once the miracle-child of Bethlehem had been dispossessed. And now it is daylight—plain to me that in the simplest act of loving self-surrender there is the germ of all faith, the essence of all lasting religion. Quicken human service, purify and strengthen human love, and have no fear but that the conscience will find its God! For all the time this quickening and this purification are His work in thee. Around thee are the institutions, the ideals, the knowledge and beliefs, ethical or intellectual, in which that work, that life, have been so far fragmentarily and partially realised. Submit thyself and press forward. Thou knowest well what it means to be *better*: more pure, more loving, more self-denying. And in thy struggle to be all these, God cometh to thee and abides. . . . *But the greatest of these is love!*'

'November 20th.—To-day I have finished the last of my New Testament tracts, the last at any rate for a time. While Ancrum lives I have resolved to suspend them. They trouble him deeply; and I, who owe him so much, will not voluntarily add to his burden. His wife is with him, a somewhat heavy, dark-faced woman, with a slumbrous eye, which may, however, be capable of kindling. They have left Mortimer Street, and have gone to live in a little house on the road to Cheadle. He seems perfectly happy, and though the doctor is discouraging, I at least can see no change for the worse. She sits by him and reads or works, without much talking, but is all the time attentive to his lightest movement. Friends send them flowers which brighten the little house, his "boys" visit him in the evenings, he is properly fed, and altogether I am more happy about him than I have been for long. It required considerable courage, this move, on her part; for there are a certain number of people still left who knew Ancrum at college, and remember the story; and those who

believed him a bachelor are of course scandalised and wondering. But the talk, whatever it is, does not seem to molest them much. He offered to leave Manchester, but she would not let him. "What would he do away from you and his boys?" she said to me. There is a heroism in it all the same.

' . . . So my New Testament work may rest a while.—During these autumn weeks, it has helped me through some terrible hours.

'When I look back over the mass of patient labour which has accumulated during the present century round the founder of Christianity and the origins of his society—when I compare the text-books of the day with the text-books of sixty years ago—I no longer wonder at the empty and ignorant arrogance with which the French eighteenth century treated the whole subject. The first stone of the modern building had not been laid when Voltaire wrote, unless perhaps in the Wolfenbüttel fragments. He knew, in truth, no more than the Jesuits, much less in fact than the better men among them.

' . . . It has been like the unravelling of a piece of fine and ancient needlework—and so discovering the secrets of its make and craftsmanship. A few loose ends were first followed up; then gradually the whole tissue has been involved, till at last the nature and quality of each thread, the purpose and the skill of each stitch, are becoming plain, and what was mystery rises into knowledge.

' . . . But how close and fine a web!—and how difficult and patient the process by which Christian *reality* has to be grasped! There is no short cut—one must toil.

'But after one has toiled, what are the rewards? Truth first—which is an end in itself and not a means to anything beyond. Then—the great figure of Christianity given back to you—with something at least of the first magic, the first "natural truth" of look and tone. Through and beyond dogmatic overlay, and Messianic theory and wonder-loving addition, to recover, at least fragmentarily, the actual voice, the first meaning, which is also the eternal meaning, of Jesus—Paul—"John"!

'Finally—a conception of Christianity in which you discern once more its lasting validity and significance—its imperishable place in human life. It becomes simply that preaching of the Kingdom of God which belongs to and affects you—you, the modern European—just as Greek philosophy, Stoic or Cynic, was that preaching of it which belonged to and affected Epictetus.'

'November 24th.—Mr. O'Kelly writes to me to-day his usual hopeless report. No news! I do not even know whether she is alive, and I can do nothing—absolutely nothing.

'Yes—let me correct myself, there is *some* news—of an event which, if we could find her, might simplify matters a little. Montjoie is dead in hospital—at the age of thirty-six—

'Is there *any* other slavery and chain like that of tempera



ment? As I look back on the whole course of my relation to Louie, I am conscious only of a sickening sense of utter failure. Our father left her to me, and I have not been able to hold her back from—nay, I have helped to plunge her into the most obvious and commonplace ruin. Yet I am always asking myself, if it were to do again, could I do any better? Has any other force developed in me which would make it possible for me *now* to break through the barriers between her nature and mine, to love her sincerely, asking for nothing again, to help her to a saner and happier life?

'If sometimes I dream that so it is, it is to *her* I owe it—to *her* whom I carry on my bosom, and whose hand did once, or so it seemed, unlock to me the gates of God. *Lucy! my Lucy!*

'... All my past life becomes sometimes intolerable to me. I can see nothing in it that is not tarnished and flecked with black stains of egotism, pride, hardness, moral indolence.

'And the only reparation possible, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds," at which my fainting heart sinks.

'Sometimes I find much comfort in the saying of a lonely thinker, "Let us humbly accept from God even our own nature; not that we are called upon to accept the evil and the disease in us, but let us accept *ourselves* in spite of the evil and the disease."

*'Que vivre est difficile—ô mon cœur fatigué!'*

## CHAPTER XI

By the end of December David Grieve was near breaking down. Dr. Mildmay insisted brusquely on his going away.

'As far as I can see you will live to be an old man,' he said, 'but if you go on like this, it will be with shattered powers. You are driving yourself to death, yet at the present moment you have no natural driving force. It is all artificial, a matter of will. Do, for heaven's sake, get away from these skies and these streets, and leave all work and all social reforms behind. The first business of the citizen—prate as you like!—is to keep his nerves and his digestion in going order.'

David laughed and yielded. The advice, in fact, corresponded to an inward thirst, and had, moreover, a coincidence to back it. In one of the Manchester papers two or three mornings before he had seen the advertisement of a farm to let, which had set vibrating all his passion for and memory of the moorland. It was a farm about half a mile from Needham Farm, on one of the lower slopes of Kinder Low. It had belonged to a peasant owner, lately dead. The heirs wished to sell, but failing a purchaser were willing to let on a short lease.

It was but a small grazing farm, and the rent was low. David went to the agent, took it at once, and in a few days, to the amazement of Reuben and Hannah, to whom he wrote only the night before he arrived, he and Sandy, and a servant, were estab-

lished with a minimum of furniture, but a sufficiency of blankets and coals, in two or three rooms of the little grey-walled house.

'Well, it caps me, it do!' Hannah said to herself, in her astonishment as she stood on her own doorstep the day after the arrival, and watched the figures of David and Sandy disappearing along the light crisp snow of the nearer fields in the direction of the Red Brook and the sheep-fold. They had looked in to ask for Reuben, and had gone in pursuit of him.

What on earth should make a man in the possession of his natural senses leave a warm town-house in January, and come to camp in 'owd Ben's' farm, was, indeed, past Hannah's divination. In reality, no sudden resolve could have been happier. Sandy was a hardy little fellow, and with the first breath of the moorland wind David felt a load, which had been growing too heavy to bear, lifting from his breast. His youth, his manhood, reasserted themselves. The bracing clearness of what seemed to be the setting-in of a long frost put a new life into him; winter's 'bright and intricate device' of ice-fringed stream, of rimy grass, of snow-clad moor, of steel-blue skies, filled him once more with natural joy, carried him out of himself. He could not keep himself indoors; he went about with Reuben or the shepherd, after the sheep; he fed the cattle at Needham Farm, and brought his old knowledge to bear on the rearing of a sickly calf; he watched for the grouse, or he carried his pockets full of bread for the few blackbirds or moor-pippits that cheered his walks into the fissured solitudes of the great Peak plateau, walks which no one to whom every inch of the ground was not familiar dared have ventured, seeing how misleading and treacherous even light snow-drifts may become in the black bog-land of these high and lonely moors; or he toiled up the side of the Scout with Sandy on his back, that he might put the boy on one of the boulders beside the top of the Downfall, and, holding him fast, bid him look down at the great icicles which marked its steep and waterless bed, gleaming in the short-lived sun.

The moral surroundings, too, of the change were cheering. There, over the brow, in the comfortable little cottage, where he had long since placed her, with a woman to look after her, was Margaret—quite childish and out of her mind, but happy and well cared for. He and Sandy would trudge over from time to time to see her, he carrying the boy in a plaid slung round his shoulders when the snow was deep. Once Sandy went to Frimley with the Needham Farm shepherd, and when David came to fetch him he found the boy and Margaret playing cat's-cradle together by the fire, and the eagerness in Sandy's pursed lips, and on the ethereally blanched and shrunken face of Margaret, brought the tears to David's eyes, as he stood smiling and looking on. But she did not suffer; for memory was gone; only the gentle 'imperishable child' remained.

And at Needham Farm he had never known the atmosphere so still. Reuben was singularly cheerful and placid. Whether