seems that if I could only have one day more of health, I would do many things that I have left undone. You shall write down my wishes, doctor. It will do as well; for there's only themselves, and they won't dispute one with the other. Let a little table be brought, and pen, ink, and paper."

He lay quiet while these directions were obeyed, and then began again.

"I am in very little pain, considering that I am going; not half as much as when I lay in that ditch. Thank God for it! It might have been that I could not have left a written line, or said a word of farewell to you. There's sure to be a bit of blue sky in the darkest trouble; and the more implicitly we trust, the more blue sky we shall find. I have not been what I ought to be, especially in the matter of disputing with Chattaway—not but what it's Chattaway's hardness that has been in fault. But God is taking me from a world of care, and I trust he will forgive all my shortcomings for our Saviour's sake. Is the table ready?"

"It is all ready," said Mr. King.

"Then leave me alone with the doctor a short time, dear ones," he resumed. "We shall not keep you out long."

Nora, who had brought in the things required, held the door open for them to pass through. The pinched look that the face, lying there, was assuming, struck upon her ominously.

"After all, the boy was right," she murmured. "The hole, scratched before this house, was not meant for Jim Sanders."

CHAPTER V.

LOOKING ON THE DEAD.

THE sun rose gloriously, dispersing the early October frost, and shedding its beams upon the world. But the beams fall upon dark scenes sometimes; perhaps more often than on bright ones.

George Ryle was leaning on the fold-yard gate. He had strolled out without his hat, and had bent his head down in his grief. Not that he was shedding tears now. He had shed plenty during the night; but tears cannot flow always, even from an aching heart.

Hasty steps were heard approaching down the road, and George raised his head. They were Mr. Chattaway's. He stopped suddenly at sight of George.

"George, what is this about your father? What has happened? Is he dead?"

"He is dying," replied George. "The doctors are with him. Mr. King has been here all night, and Mr. Benage has just come again from Barmester. They have sent us out of the room; me and Treve. They let mamma stop."

"But how on earth did it happen?" asked Mr. Chattaway. "I cannot make it out. The first thing I heard when I woke this morning, was, that Mr. Ryle had been gored to death by the bull. What brought him near the bull?"

"He was going through the field up to your house, and the bull set on him——"

"But when? when?" hastily interrupted Mr. Chattaway.

"It was yesterday afternoon. Papa came in directly after you rode away, and I gave him your message. He said he would go up then to the Hold, and speak to you; and he took the field way instead of the road."

"Now, how could he take it? He knew that way was hardly safe for strangers. Not but what the bull ought to have known him."

"He had a scarlet cravat in his hand, and he thinks it was that that excited the bull. He was tossed into the ditch, and lay there, undiscovered, until past ten at night."

"And he is badly hurt?"

"He is dying," replied George, "dying now. I think that is why they sent us from the room."

Mr. Chattaway paused in dismay. Though a hard, selfish man, who had taken delight in quarrelling with Mr. Ryle and putting upon him, he did possess some feelings of humanity as well as his neighbours; and the terrible nature of the case naturally called them forth. George strove manfully to keep down his tears; speaking of the circumstances was almost too much for him, but he did not care to give way before the world, especially before that unit in it represented by Mr. Chattaway. Mr. Chattaway rested his elbow on the gate, and looked down at George.

"This is very shocking, lad. I am sorry to hear it. Whatever will the farm do without him? How shall you all get on?"

"It is thinking of that which has been troubling him all

night," said George, speaking by snatches lest his sobs should burst forth. "He said we might get a living at the farm, if you would let us do it. If you would not be hard," added George, determined to speak out.

"Hard, he called me, did he?" said Mr. Chattaway. "It's not my hardness that has been in fault, George, but his pride. He has been as saucy and independent as if he did not owe a shilling; always making himself out my equal."

"He is your equal, Mr. Chattaway," said George, speaking meekly in his sadness.

"My equal! Working Tom Ryle equal with the Chattaways! A man who rents two or three hundred acres and does half the work on them himself, the equal of the landlord who owns them and ever so many more to them!—the equal of the Squire of Trevlyn Hold! Where did you pick up those notions, George Ryle?"

George had a great mind to say that in point of strict justice Mr. Chattaway had no more right to be Squire of Trevlyn Hold, or to own those acres, than his father had; not quite so much right, if it came to that. He had a great mind to say that the Ryles were gentlemen, and once owners of what his father only rented now. But George remembered they were in Chattaway's power; he could sell them up, and turn them off the farm, if he pleased; and he held his tongue.

"Not that I blame you for the notions," Mr. Chattaway resumed, in the same thin, unpleasant tones—never was there a voice more thin and wiry than his. "It's natural you should have got them from Ryle, for they were his. He was always—— But there! I won't say any more, with him lying there, poor fellow. We'll let it drop, George."

"I do not know how things are between you and my father," said George, "except that there's money owing to you. But if you will not press us, if you will let mamma stay on the farm, I——"

"That's enough," interrupted Mr. Chattaway. "Never trouble your head, George, about business that's above you. Anything that's between me and your father, or your mother either, is no concern of yours; you are not old enough for interference yet. I should like to see him. Do you think I may go in?"

"We can ask," answered George; some vague and indistinct idea floating to his mind that a death-bed reconciliation might help to smooth future difficulties.

He led the way through the fold-yard. Nora was coming out at the back-door as they advanced to it, her eyes wet.

"Nora, do you think Mr. Chattaway may go in to see my father?" asked George.

"If it will do Mr. Chattaway any good," responded Nora, who ever regarded that gentleman in the light of a common enemy, and could with difficulty bring herself to be commonly civil to him. "It's all over; but Mr. Chattaway can see what's left of him."

"Is he dead?" whispered Mr. Chattaway; while George lifted his white and startled face.

"Yes, he is dead!" broke forth Nora, in sobs; "and perhaps there may be some that will wish now they had been less hard with him in life. The doctors and Mrs. Ryle have just come out, and the women have gone in to put him straight and comfortable. Mr. Chattaway can go in also, if he'd like it."

Mr. Chattaway, it appeared, did not like it. He turned from the door, drawing George with him.

"George, tell your mother that I am grieved and vexed at her trouble, and I wish that beast of a bull had been stuck, before he had done what he has. Tell her that if there's any little thing she could fancy from the Hold, to let Edith know, and she'll gladly send it to her. Good-bye, lad. You and Treve must keep up, you know."

He passed out by the fold-yard gate, as he had entered, and George leaned upon it again with his aching heart; an orphan now. Treve and Caroline had their mother left, but he had no one. It is true he had never known a mother, and Mrs. Ryle, his father's second wife, had supplied the place of one. She had done her duty by him; but it had not been in love; not very much in gentleness. Of her own children she was inordinately fond; she had not been so of George—which perhaps was in accordance with human nature. It had never troubled George much; but somehow the fact now struck upon him with a sense of intense loneliness. His father had loved him deeply and sincerely; but—he was gone.

In spite of his heavy sorrow, George was awake to the sounds going on in the distance, the everyday labour of life. The cow-boy was calling to his cows; one of the men, acting for Jim Sanders, was going out with the team. And now there came a butcher, riding up from Barmester, and George knew he had come about some beasts, all unconscious that the master was

no longer here to command, or to deal with. Work, especially farm work, must go on, although death may have accomplished its mission.

The butcher, riding fast, had nearly reached the gate, and George was turning away from it to retire indoors, when the unhappy thought came upon him—Who is to see this man? His father no longer there, who must represent him?—must answer comers—must stand in his place? It brought the fact of what had happened more *practically* before George Ryle's mind than anything else had brought it. He stood where he was, instead of turning away. He must rise superior to his grief that day, and be useful; he must rise above his years in the future, for his step-mother's sake.

"Good morning, Mr. George," cried the butcher, as he rode up. "Is the master about?"

"No," answered George, speaking as steadily as he could. "He—he will never be about again. He is dead."

The butcher thought it a boy's joke. "None of that, young gentleman!" said he, with a laugh. "Which way shall I go to find him?"

"Mr. Cope," said George, raising his grave face—and its expression struck a chill to the man's heart—"I should not joke upon the subject of death. My father was attacked by Chattaway's bull yesterday evening, and has died of the injuries."

"Lawk a mercy!" uttered the startled man. "Attacked by Chattaway's bull! and—and—died of the injuries! Sure-ly it can't be!"

George had turned his face away; it was getting more than he could bear.

"Have Chattaway killed the bull?" was the next question put by the butcher.

"I suppose not."

"Then he is no man and no gentleman if he don't do it. If a beast of mine injured a neighbour, I'd stop him from injuring another, no matter what might be its value. Dear me! Mr. George, I'd rather have heard any news than this."

George's head was completely turned away now. The butcher roused himself to think of business. His time was short, for he had to be back again in the town before his shop opened for the day.

"I came up about the beasts," he said. "The master as good as sold 'em to me yesterday; it was only a matter of a few shillings split us. But I'll give in sooner than not have.

'em. Who is going to carry on the dealings in Mr. Ryle's place? Who can I speak to?"

"You can see John Pinder," answered George. "He knows most about things."

The butcher guided his horse through the fold-yard, scattering the cocks and hens in various directions, and gained the barn. John Pinder was in it, and came out to him; and George escaped indoors.

It was a sad day. The excitement over, the doctors departed, the gossipers and neighbours dispersed, the village carpenter having come and taken a certain measure, the house was left to its monotonous quiet; that distressing quiet which tells upon the spirits. Nora's voice was subdued, and Molly went about on tiptoe. The boys wished it was over; that, and many more days to come. Treve fairly broke bounds about twelve, said he could not bear it, and went out amongst the men. In the afternoon George was summoned upstairs to the chamber of Mrs. Ryle, where she had remained since the morning.

"George, you shall go to Barmester," she said. "I wish to know how Caroline bears the news, poor child! Mr. Benage said he would call and break it to her; but I cannot get her grief out of my head. You can go over in the gig; but don't stay. Be home by tea-time."

It is more than probable that George felt the commission as a relief, and he started as soon as the gig was ready. As he went out of the yard, Nora called after him to be careful how he drove. Not that he had never driven before; but Mr. Ryle, or some one else, had always been in the gig with him. Now he was alone; and it brought his loss again more forcibly before him.

He reached Barmester, and saw his sister Caroline, who was staying there on a visit. She was not overwhelmed with grief, but, on the contrary, appeared to have taken the matter coolly and lightly. The fact was, the little girl had no definite ideas on the subject of death. She had never been brought into contact with it, and could not at all realize the fact told her, that she would never see papa again. Better for the little heart perhaps that it was so; enough of sorrow comes with later years; and Mrs. Ryle may have judged wisely in deciding to keep the child where she was until after the funeral.

When George reached home, he found Nora at tea alone. Master Treve had chosen to take his with his mamma in her

chamber. George sat down with Nora. The shutters were closed, and the room was bright with fire and candle; but to George all things were dreary.

"Why don't you eat?" asked Nora, presently, perceiving that the bread-and-butter remained untouched.

"I'm not hungry," replied George.

"Not hungry? Did you have tea at Barmester?"

"I did not have anything," he said.

"Now, look you here, George. If you are going to give way to your grief—— Mercy me! What's that?"

Some one had come in hastily at the door. A lovely girl, in a flowing white evening dress, and blue ribbons in her hair. A heavy shawl, which she had worn on her shoulders, fell to the ground, and she stood panting, as one who has outrun her breath, her fair curls falling, her cheeks crimson, her dark blue eyes glistening. On the pretty arms were clasped coral bracelets, and a thin gold chain, bearing a coral cross, was on her neck. It was Maude Trevlyn, whom you saw at Trevlyn Hold last night. So out of place did she look in that scene, that Nora for once was silent. She could only stare.

"I ran away, Nora," said Maude, coming forward. "Octave has a party, but they won't miss me if I stay only a little time. I have wanted to come all day, but they would not let me."

"Who would not?" asked Nora.

"Not any of them. Even Aunt Edith. Nora, is it *true?* Is it true that he is dead?" she reiterated, her pretty hands clasped with emotion, and her great blue eyes cast upwards at Nora, waiting for the answer.

"Oh, Miss Maude! you might have heard it was true enough up at the Hold. And so they have a party, have they! Some folk in Madam Chattaway's place might have had the grace to put it off, when their sister's husband was lying dead!"

"It is not Aunt Edith's fault. You know it is not, Nora. George, you know it also. She has been crying several times to-day; and she asked long and long ago for the bull to be sent off. But he was not sent. Oh, George, I am so sorry! I wish I could have seen him before he died. There was no one I liked so well as Mr. Ryle."

"Will you have some tea?" asked Nora.

"No, I must not stay. Should Octave miss me she will tell of me, and then I should be punished. What do you think? Rupert displeased Cris in some way, and Miss Diana sent him to bed away from all the pleasure. It is a shame!"

"It is all a shame together, up at Trevlyn Hold—all that concerns Rupert," said Nora, not, perhaps, very judiciously.

"Nora, where did he die?" asked Maude, in a whisper. "Did they take him up to his bedroom when they brought him home?"

"They carried him in there," said Nora, pointing to the sitting-room door. "He is lying there now."

"Nora, I want to see him," she continued.

Nora received the intimation dubiously. "I don't know whether you had better," said she, after a pause.

"Yes, I must, Nora. What was that about the dog?" added Maude. "Did he scratch out a grave before the porch?"

"Who told you anything about that?" asked Nora, sharply.

"Ann Canham came and told it at the Hold. Was it so, Nora?"

Nora nodded. "A great hole, Miss Maude, nearly big enough to lay the master in. Not that I thought it was a token for *him!* I thought only of Jim Sanders. And some folk laugh at these warnings!" she added. "There sits one," pointing to George.

"Well, never mind it now, Nora," said George, hastily. Never was a boy less given to superstition; but, somehow, with his father lying where he was, he did not care to hear much about the mysterious hole.

Maude moved towards the door. "Take me in to see him, Nora," she pleaded.

"Will you promise not to be frightened?" asked Nora. "Some young people can't endure the sight of a dead person."

"Why should I be frightened?" returned Maude. "He cannot hurt me."

Nora rose in acquiescence, and took up the candle. But George laid his hand on the girl.

"Don't go, Maude. Nora, you must not let her go in. She might not like it. It would not be right."

Now, of all things, Nora had a dislike to be dictated to, especially by those she called children. She saw no reason why Maude should not look upon the dead if she wished to do so, and she gave a sharp word of reprimand to George, all in an undertone. How could they speak aloud, entering into that presence?

"Maude, Maude!" he whispered. "I would advise you not to go in."

"Let me go, George!" she pleaded. "I should like to see