

"Having spoken thus, she covered her face and vanished.

"The next day the woman, ashamed of her own selfish happiness, arose and went forth. Carrying her green velvet cushion and bobbins in her hand, she went from cottage to cottage. The women and the maidens thronged around her to be instructed in the art she herself had so miraculously learned. So they also became rich, and the valley of St. Aubin famous for this manufacture."

Damaris' thoughts and fancies clung to this little legend long after Monsieur St. Just had done with it and wandered off again to his chronicles of toil and barter, and her mind busied itself with comparisons.

The talent bestowed so divinely and mysteriously upon the peasantry of the valley as a boon, and a precious means of maintaining their independence, what had it become? As she saw it in its working to-day, it seemed to have become a curse and a degradation. Who was to blame? Where lay the wrong? For wrong and blame there must be to have turned this gift of God, this skill of handicraft, into the heavy yoke which lay upon the people now, crushing out all finer sympathies, all aspirations after improvement, leaving nothing but animal instincts for the guidance of these poor human machines.

"The art has degenerated," continued Monsieur, and he began to trace its decadence, and to account for it in the purely artistic sense in which he was considering the subject. His highest conception of it seemed to be an æsthetic one; he ignored, or failed to perceive, the moral principle which linked it with the divine. The workers themselves were no more to him in connection with the art than are the conglomerations of wheels and springs so largely used now in the production of the finest textures.

For the first time Damaris was conscious of a want in him; but she buried the disappointment deeply in her own heart. Even to admit it to herself seemed to be disloyal towards him whom she so cordially admired and so truly liked.

Nevertheless, to sit quietly and listen to this misjudgment of those who were not able to put in a disclaimer for themselves, was more than she was capable of doing. She started to her feet under the excitement of a rare impulse which carried her for the time being entirely out of herself, her cheeks burning, her eyes shining with indignation.

"Monsieur, *ce n'est pas juste—ce n'est pas juste!*" she repeated, as though to give force to her words.

Monsieur Etienne shut his book with a snap and a quick glance of astonishment.

"The real cause why this art no longer flourishes as it did a few centuries ago lies much deeper than you seem to be able to penetrate. It consists of a cruel, crushing wrong, the wherefore of which I hoped you would have been able to explain to me. But you seem to have no notion of its existence even, although it is breaking the spirits of the people dependent upon you. Circumstances

have made you lord over them, but you live over their heads in this lofty tower, pursuing your own thoughts, dreaming your own visionary dreams, while in the valley below the people lead degraded, animal lives, given to incessant toil without the chance of learning how its dignity should uplift them."

She paused to take breath, this angry Nemesis, this little defiant Daniel come to judgment.

"*Mais, mademoiselle,*" he began, but Damaris did not hear him. This was no question of scholarly learning, nor of æsthetic taste, and she was more at home in it than he; it lay in the domain of active human sympathies, and of those eternal laws which link together the creatures of a living God in one vast bond of interest.

"If you would only meet them," she continued, her voice breaking a little with its fervour and its earnestness—"I don't mean place yourself in physical contact with them—but if you would only look into some of the stolid, almost inhuman faces that bend above the flying fingers, and inquire into the cause which is reducing them to the level of brute beasts—if you would let your heart speak instead of your head, you would soon learn more than all your books can teach you."

Monsieur St. Just was pale to the lips. He felt her words as only a proud and sensitive man could feel them.

"Mademoiselle, this is no light accusation that you have brought against me."

Damaris turned paler than he, and for one moment the enormity of her daring stood before her. Then her spirit rose within her; she would not be frightened from the stand she had taken.

"You believe that, like a faithless sentry, I have fallen asleep at my post and allowed the foe to pass," he said.

"No, monsieur. You have been looking for the coming of the foe in the clouds, and your eyes have been fixed on them, so that he has slipped by at your feet."

"Without metaphor, where do you consider my duty lies?"

"I would not dare to dictate it to you."

"Dare! You were daring enough in all conscience just now."

"I was daring for those who can dare nothing for themselves."

There was silence, and Damaris, as she furtively watched Monsieur's pained and averted face, began to feel something of compunction, and to marvel at her own temerity. Would her hasty words put a check upon their pleasant intercourse? Did he think she had taken an unjustifiable liberty, and overstepped the bounds of her position as his mother's *protégée* and companion? If so, he was not free from blame, for had he not, ever since that first evening in his mother's *salon*, treated her as his equal, socially and intellectually? Damaris had certainly been in danger of forgetting those limits of which the world would quickly enough remind her. But just now the worldly spirit had no representative at St. Aubin.

The fear that she had estranged this kind and gifted friend came to her with a sharp pang. Alas! the poor peasantry

whose cause she had so warmly and injudiciously espoused were quite forgotten while this fear lasted.

She tendered the first olive leaf that occurred to her.

"Monsieur Etienne," she began, timidly.

He started, but quickly veiled the flash that leapt to his eyes. His voice was cold and constrained.

"*Eh bien, mademoiselle,* what is your good pleasure?"

"My pleasure is to be friends, monsieur."

"Do you suppose, then, that the utterance of one little home truth by your daring lips has turned me into your enemy?"

The ice was breaking. Damaris felt the change of temperature, and smiled.

"There are many degrees between friendship and enmity, monsieur."

"How many will satisfy you?"

"How many removed from friendship? Not one, monsieur."

"But how are we to get back to the point from which we have drifted?"

"I suppose I ought to beg your pardon," she answered, dubiously.

"And the thought of so humiliating yourself is fiercely antagonistic to your pride, mademoiselle."

Damaris bit her lips and her colour rose.

"I would not mind if I could feel that I had been guilty of an unjustifiable offence."

"Suppose we dispense with the apology, then," he said, no longer making an attempt to hide the laughter that was in his eyes. "You make but a sorry penitent, mademoiselle; the *rôle* is not one you should assume too often."

The tone of his voice conveyed even more to her sensitive ear than his words did, and she knew that they had not only returned to the old ground, but that this little recoil and rebound had made them more closely friends than they had been.

(To be continued.)

"OF ALL FLOURS THE FLOURE."

"Of all flours the floure," so Chaucer called the daisy, or "day's eye," as he writes it. "The poet's darling," Wordsworth calls it, and truly the modest, crimson-tipped flower has been that since the days when "herb Margaret" was sung and honoured for the sake of Margaret of Anjou, in the time of her prosperity. The daisy was the flower of another noble lady, Margaret of Valois, the friend of Erasmus and Calvin, and her brother, Francis I., called her his "Marguerite of Marguerites."

We are touched by the sight of the little innocent white face that looks up so modestly and bravely from the wintry ground, and poets and history weave a romance around it; but for its own sake it is worth more than a passing glance, and will pay us with interest for our notice.

Let us pick the first daisy we see this month, and bring it home and carefully examine it. Perhaps you do not know what a world of beauty, of skill, of mechanism is contained in a single daisy blossom! To begin

with, the daisy is not a single flower, but many; it belongs to the composite flowers—that is, its head, or blossom, is composed of numerous florets inclosed in one green envelope, or, as it is called, *involucre* , which resembles the calyx or green cup of single flowers, but yet is not a true calyx. The double flowers of cultivation, such as the rose, are not compound flowers like the daisy; they are not masses of florets, but of leaves, or, as we call them, petals, and their green cup is a true calyx. Look at the daisy blossom attentively, and you will see in the centre an assemblage of perhaps as many as a hundred very small and elegantly-shaped yellow cups, surrounded by a border of white spreading flower leaves, or petals. Now, everyone of these florets, both yellow and white, is a distinct flower of itself, not certainly very large, or growing on a long stem, like most other flowers, but still a distinct flower. And there is a most wise reason for this arrangement of cups in the centre, guarded by a ring of flat flowers. The more you study the hidden things of flowers, the more you will learn of the great and loving design that orders all. The yellow cups are shaped like bells, and are quite open, so that without some means to prevent such an occurrence, every shower of rain would fill them with water. Now, most bell-shaped flowers, as the bluebell, and different kinds of campanula, hang down their heads, and therefore, however much it may rain, they are kept as dry as if they were sheltered by a thatched roof; but the cups of the daisy are turned upwards, and, as they cannot shelter themselves, require to be protected by some other means, and here the fringe of white florets lends its aid. They are so constituted that when either rain or dew is about to fall, they slowly rise from their horizontal position and close over the yellow flowers, forming for them a covering like a tent. Should the weather be still they remain in their erect position, and the rain that falls runs down the outside of the white guardians; but if it blows hard they yield to the wind and present the base of the flower to the driving rain. In either case the yellow flowers are equally protected from the wet. If you search a meadow on a rainy day, or in the evening after sunset, you will not find a daisy open. Here and there you may perhaps discover one which seems to depart from this rule, but you will be sure to find, on examination, that all the central flowers are either dead or withering, and consequently stand in no need of protection.

But do we tell you this only because it is one of Nature's endless little bits of interest, which so many never open their eyes to? Partly that, but still more because it is one of Nature's beautiful lessons that we must open the eyes of our soul also.

It is Schiller who says, "If thou wouldst attain to thy highest, go look upon a flower; what that does willessly, that do thou willingly." "There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and no kind is without signification." Let us listen to this little silent flower teacher; perhaps the Master of us all may have sent her with a message.

First of all, we think of the composite flowers, with their individual florets, each complete in itself, each leading its own life, and yet each members one of another, suffering with each other, helping each other, making' one perfect whole. The composite human flower is the family, the "involucre" that holds all together is the home. In the centre of the daisy are the little golden cups, upturned to heaven, open-mouthed to receive either good or ill. In the central spot of home are our little ones, with innocent faces, that are not ashamed or afraid to be ever looking up, and these little ones are too young and helpless to shelter themselves. Around the

golden cup in the daisy blossom is the white living palisade, that slowly rises from its horizontal position and forms a tent over the little ones to protect them when danger threatens. In the home is the band of elder brothers and elder sisters, who stand around their little ones to guard them from harm, and take care that nothing but the rays of the sun of God's love shall fall upon them.

Think of this, brothers and sisters! Think of the little golden cups, that come empty from the hand of God, and that He gives you to watch and guard. Will they be still golden and pure when the Beloved goes down into His garden to gather lilies; or will they be choked and stained, because the watchers He appointed have forgotten or neglected the work He gave them to do; or, worse than all, have helped to defile those little ones themselves? The daisy guards are white—pure white. Be ye pure white, too; pure in example, pure in word, pure in kindly, tender deeds, and *always* be one! A single white petal could do nothing, but "union is strength." Brothers and sisters, learn to bear and forbear, to take the rubs and worries of daily life and of each other gently, so that ye be never hindered from forming the band that shall guard your little ones from all that may do them hurt.

DOROTHEA'S DREAM.

"They also serve who only stand and wait."—

Milton.

"The prayers of the saints, ascending up before God."—*Rev. viii. 4.*

"The patience of the saints."—*Rev. xiv. 12.*

DOROTHEA and Alethea were twin sisters who lived together in the populous little town of Hamborough.

Alethea's health was very delicate, the result of a fall in infancy; but few women were stronger or more vigorous than Dorothea.

Alethea lay on her sofa from day to day—whether the glory of autumn lay upon forest and field, or the grey of winter shrouded the landscape in mysterious sadness, or the gladness of spring woke all things to new life, or the summer sunshine glowed on the perfect loveliness of Nature.

Yes! from day to day, without change from the monotony, almost without respite from the pain. She bore it all, for the most part, bravely; but there were times when the sense of what she called her uselessness swept like an avalanche over her soul, crushing her to the very earth, and stilling every voice within but that of a bitter murmuring at the hardness of her lot.

To this "uselessness" the life of her sister Dorothea offered a striking contrast.

She (Dorothea) led indeed a life of literally restless activity. No work of love or mercy in the parish but had her for one of its most energetic labourers; no scheme of philanthropy or social improvement but had her for one of its most enthusiastic promoters. Early and late she toiled, teaching in the schools, visiting the poor, ministering to the sick. If the clergy wanted a woman's help in their work it was to Dorothea they turned; if trouble fell unexpectedly in some cottage home, it was to Dorothea that the inmates hastened for assistance and sympathy.

No wonder that the contrast between the lives of the two sisters often painfully affected the invalid: the one all zeal and loving labour, the other too weak and pain-stricken to take the smallest share in the never-ending toil.

The enemy of souls' is, we know, never idle; the "roaring lion" never relaxes in his search for "whom he may devour;" and just as he whispered into the ear of Alethea

that she was but a useless toy, a barren figure cumbering the ground, that it would be better that she should curse God and die; so he whispered to Dorothea that she might well rejoice in her work, might will be proud of it and trust in it.

It is ever so. The old dragon is ever on the watch, the enemy penetrates into every wheat-field to sow tares.

And, indeed, Dorothea began to listen to his whispers, began to be very pleasantly conscious of the estimation in which she was held, and to reflect at times that certainly no one she knew was as indefatigable as she was.

But if Satan is always on the alert, we know of One who in His watch and ward of His redeemed slumbers not nor sleeps. "And I myself caring for your souls," He has Himself assured us; and whilst Dorothea was lending a too willing ear to the suggestions of the evil one, the "Lover of souls" was offering to draw the wanderer back to Himself.

One night Dorothea was unusually tired. There was an epidemic sickness in the town which was taxing all the energies of the charitable. A thick drizzling rain had been falling all day, but Dorothea, undaunted by it, had been on her feet since early morning, going from cottage to cottage on her errands of mercy.

"I shall sleep soundly to-night," she said to herself, as she laid her weary head upon her pillow. Nevertheless, she did not sleep too soundly to dream a dream.

She was in a place that she knew not, and as she wondered where it might be a shining figure stood before her. His raiment gleamed with the whiteness of Tabor, and "the light that is not on sea nor shore" played like a glory round Him. In His hands He carried a crown.

Dorothea was dazzled at "the brightness of His presence," and sank abashed before His searching gaze.

Then a voice like the music of the spheres spoke to her.

"My child, for whom do I bring this crown?"

Dorothea bethinking her of the work she valued so much, made answer in hesitating tones:—

"For me, perchance, dear Lord?"

A sad smile flitted for a moment over the sweet, grave countenance of the shining One.

"It is for her," He replied, "who of all women in Hamborough has the greatest faith in my past sacrifice, and who does most work for Me."

Then Dorothea felt sure, and she stretched out her hands to receive the glittering crown.

But the bright Being made no response to this gesture.

"Do you *now* know whom it is for?" He asked.

And the peculiar stress He laid on the "*now*," prevented Dorothea from giving utterance to the words that were trembling on her tongue.

"For me, perchance, dear Master?"

He saw her hesitation, and, understanding all things, understood it.

"It is for Alethea," He said, speaking again. "Her patience and her unceasing prayers prevail exceedingly at the throne of grace for my dear people in Hamborough."

Then He vanished, and Dorothea knew that activity was not everything—that, indeed, prayer was more availing. And when, in the morning, she related the story of her vision to Alethea, the languid sufferer understood that she had been wrong ever to repine at the uselessness of her lot, for that "they also serve who only stand and wait."

Thus two souls, faltering and stumbling on their heavenward way, were helped onward; one learnt resignation to apparent uselessness, the other something more of the might of prayer.