

"Yes," said Mary, looking at her with surprise, "we ought all to do what is right. Duty before all things."

"When I am sure it is right to do anything," said Grace "I try to do it, no matter how hard it is."

"You are a little heroine," rejoined Mary. "But," she added to herself, glancing at the sheet of paper before her, "it is not always easy to know what is right."

"I think," said Grace, coming to the table, "I'll write a few lines to Anna."

"Oh, do; she will be delighted; she was very fond of you."

"Why do people say that you will be a nun?" Grace asked. "I suspect it is Anna will be the nun, in spite of her fine talk about the *beau monde*. But why do they say that you will be a nun? Mrs. Xavier is quite sure that you will."

"I really don't know," replied Mary, blushing.

"Oh, 'tis because you are such a mild Madonna, I suppose," said Grace, dipping her pen in the ink. "But, on second thoughts," she added, "I won't write till to-morrow. I must turn it in my head, as I want to let her see that one can do something in the way of rounded periods without going to Belgium. And, besides, I must have a few French phrases. So finish your letter, and I'll just run out to see what Apollo is going to do with himself."

"I think you ought to go to Ellie—she is all alone."

"Ellie! She doesn't want me. Her whole soul is wrapped in her goldfinch."

"Oh, that reminds me," said Mary, "that we must go to see poor Norah Lahy to-day."

"I would like to go," said Grace, thoughtfully. "That is," she added, correcting herself, "I know I ought to like to go. But oh! 'tis saddening to look at her. It so reminds one of dying young. And, besides, I fear I hurt her mother's feelings the other day."

"You did not do it intentionally."

"Oh, indeed, no. But you know—"

' Evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as by want of heart.' "

"You do not want either heart or thought, Grace. The remark you made was natural enough under the circumstances; and you did not know Mrs. Lahy was listening to you. Now, would you not do almost anything for that poor sick girl?"

"I would," Grace replied; "but I'm ashamed to confess I feel a strong wish to keep away from her, and not even think of her."

"But if it be right?"

"I will go," said Grace in the same tone as when she said she would go back to school.

Grace went to a cupboard, and, getting upon a chair, took something from the upper shelf, and was leaving the room hastily.

"And where are you going now?" Mary asked, with some surprise.

"To Ellie," she replied. "I have some sugar for her goldfinch."

Mary smiled approvingly, and then, resting her forehead upon the back of her open hand, with which she covered the few words she had written on the sheet of note-paper, as if she wished to hide them from herself, she fell into deep thought.

"Oh, yes," she said, raising her head, "if we could be sure what is right to be done! But how can there be anything wrong in it? I think it is because I so much wish to write that I am afraid to do it. But, though my heart says 'Yes,' the 'still small voice' says 'No.' I would consult Hugh only it would add to his trouble. I wonder might Anna meet him before she comes home. But that is a foolish idea; she is as far out of his way as I am myself."

The idea, however, reminded her of the letter she had been writing to her sister, and she took up the pen and resolved to finish it.

"Is Mr. Pender gone?" Hugh asked, as he came round to the front of the house, from the yard, where he had been giving some directions to his workmen; "I thought his visit would not be so short."

"Yes, he is gone," replied Mr. Lowe, who was trying

to open the gate of the little garden under Mary's window, and thinking of those mysterious tracks in the snow; which somehow he found himself often thinking of, though the tracks were no longer there, for the snow itself had disappeared.

"There is already," he remarked, "a look of spring in the sky."

"Yes," Hugh replied, "and the snow is nearly gone from the hills."

"I am always glad," said Richard, who had joined them, "when winter is past. The bright summer-time for me!"

"Why, every one is glad at the approach of spring," replied Mr. Lowe.

"I never see the snow fading from those hills," said Hugh, "without a feeling of sadness."

"That's an odd feeling," returned the doctor, "particularly for a farmer."

"Oh, of course, I see *reason* to rejoice at the coming of spring. But what I speak of is an involuntary feeling of sadness. 'Tis like parting with an old friend. In fact, I believe there is sadness in all partings. I can fancy a prisoner looking round his dungeon for the last time with a sigh."

"Who is this coming down the hill?" the doctor asked, pointing to a horseman on the road."

"I think it is your friend, Mr. Lloyd," replied Hugh. "'Tis his horse, at all events."

"Yes, 'tis Bob—I know him now." And Richard vaulted over the little gate and got out on the road by the stile in the corner of the garden with the intention of intercepting Mr. Lloyd, and having a talk with him.

"The harriers are to meet at Somerfield's," said the doctor, after vaulting back again over the gate. "We ought to go."

"By-the-by, 'twill be a good opportunity for you to see the place," said Hugh. "You can have my horse; and I think you will like him."

"And yourself?" said Mr. Lowe.

"Well, I find I have some business to attend to, which I cannot put off. You can ride the old mare," he added, turning to his brother. "And you need not fear but she'll be able to carry you—but give her head and let her have her own way."

"All right," said the doctor, "let us go fit ourselves out."

Mr. Lowe readily assented, glad of the opportunity to display his horsemanship and his new breeches and boots.

The horses were led round by Barney, and while Hugh was examining the girths and stirrup-leathers, the two young men appeared booted and spurred, and were in the saddles before Barney had time to render them any assistance.

"O Mary!" Grace exclaimed, bursting into the parlor, "do come and see Apollo. He looks splendid."

Mary came to the window and said, with a quiet smile:

"He really does."

The horse was a fine one, and the rider seemed to linger longer than was necessary arranging his bridle rein.

"Do come out," said Grace; "he expects it."

Mary followed her out, and dropping her arm round Grace's shoulder, she said gaily:

"She says, Mr. Lowe, that you look splendid."

He raised his hat and smiled, as he rode slowly after the doctor, who had set off at a gallop, and was impatiently waiting for him at the gate.

"Mr. Hugh," said Barney, "how much do you think is comin' to me?"

"Why so?" Hugh asked, as he watched the paces of his horse up the hill.

"Begob, I want five shillings," replied Barney.

"For what?"

"I'm afther gettin' two an' sixpence worth of dance from Mr. Callaghan," returned Barney, looking as if, on the whole, he was not pleased with his bargain.

"Two-and-sixpence worth of dance," Grace exclaimed, laughing. "How is it sold, Barney?"

"Tuppence-ha'penny a lesson for plain dance, Miss," replied Barney, seriously, "and thruppence for figures."

"Well, and you want five shillings' worth," said Hugh.

"Well, you see, sir," rejoined Barney, scratching his