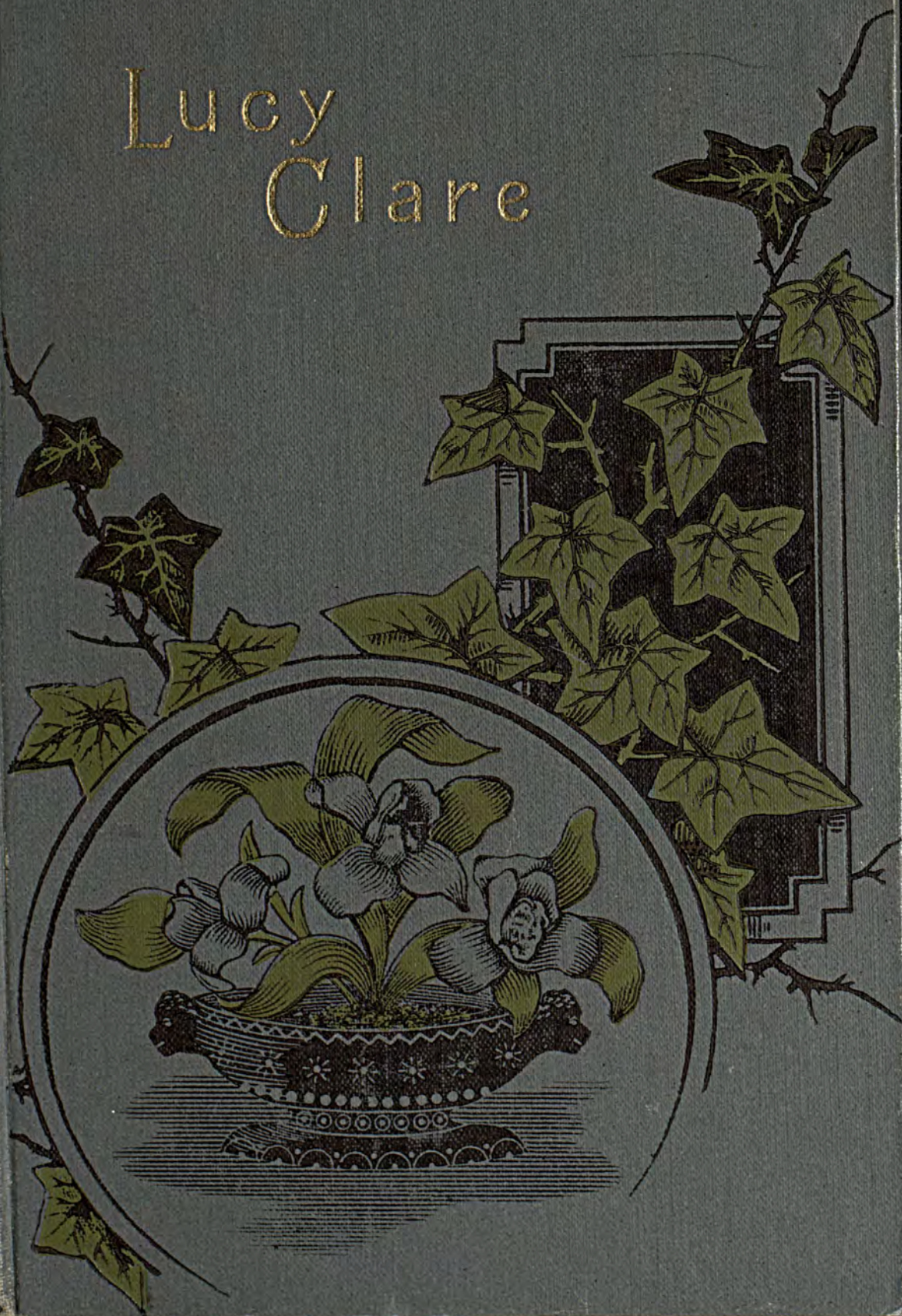


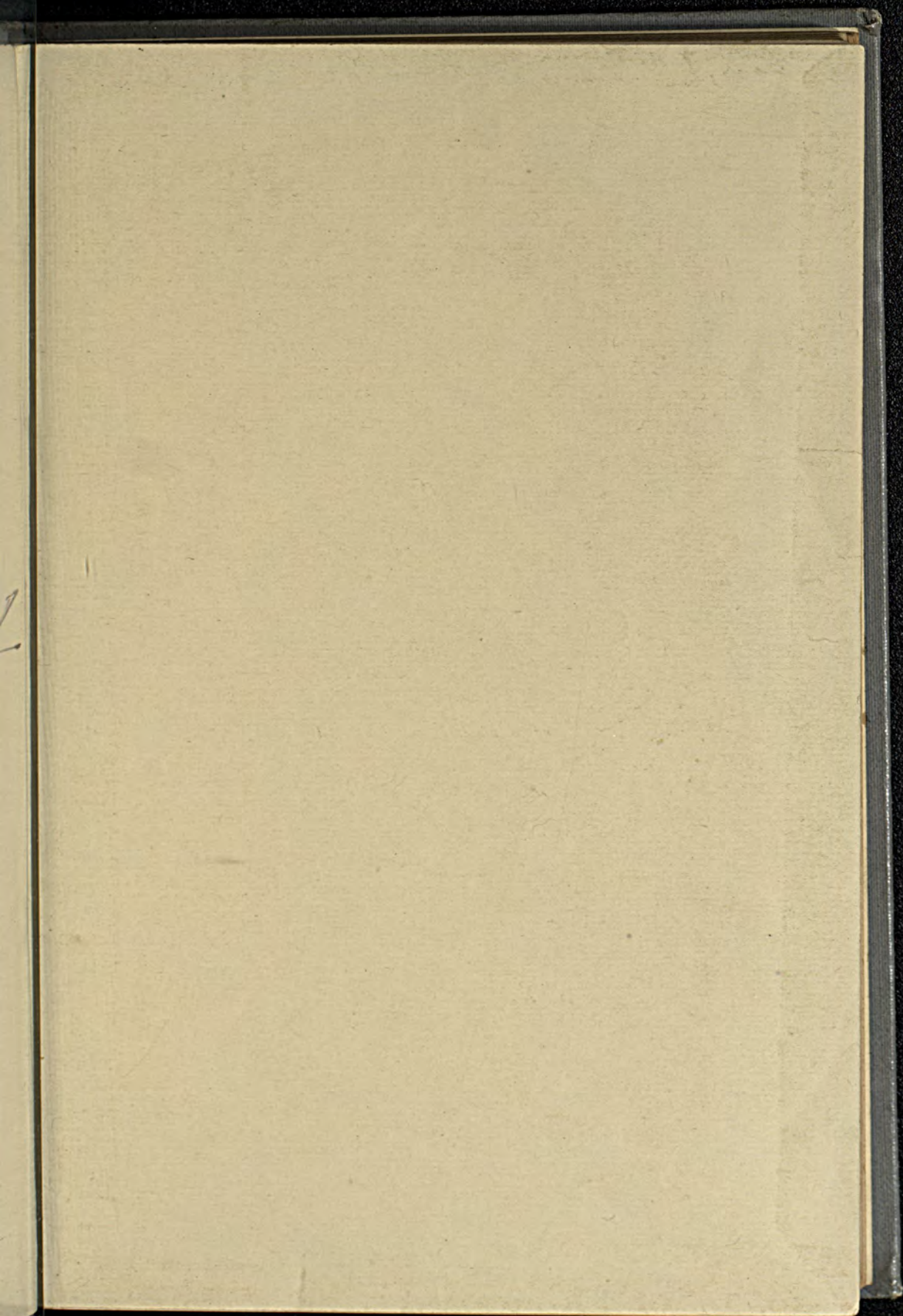
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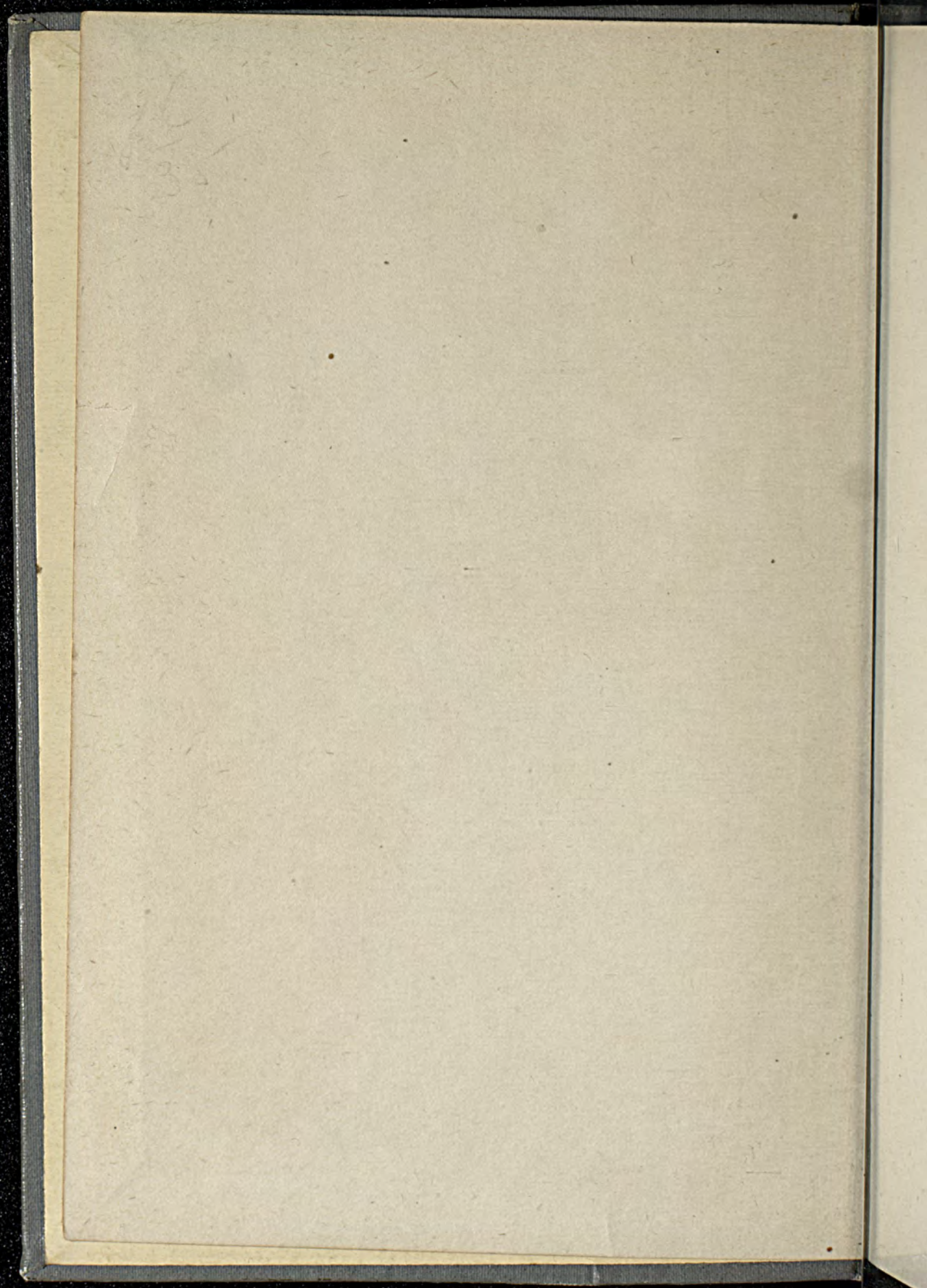


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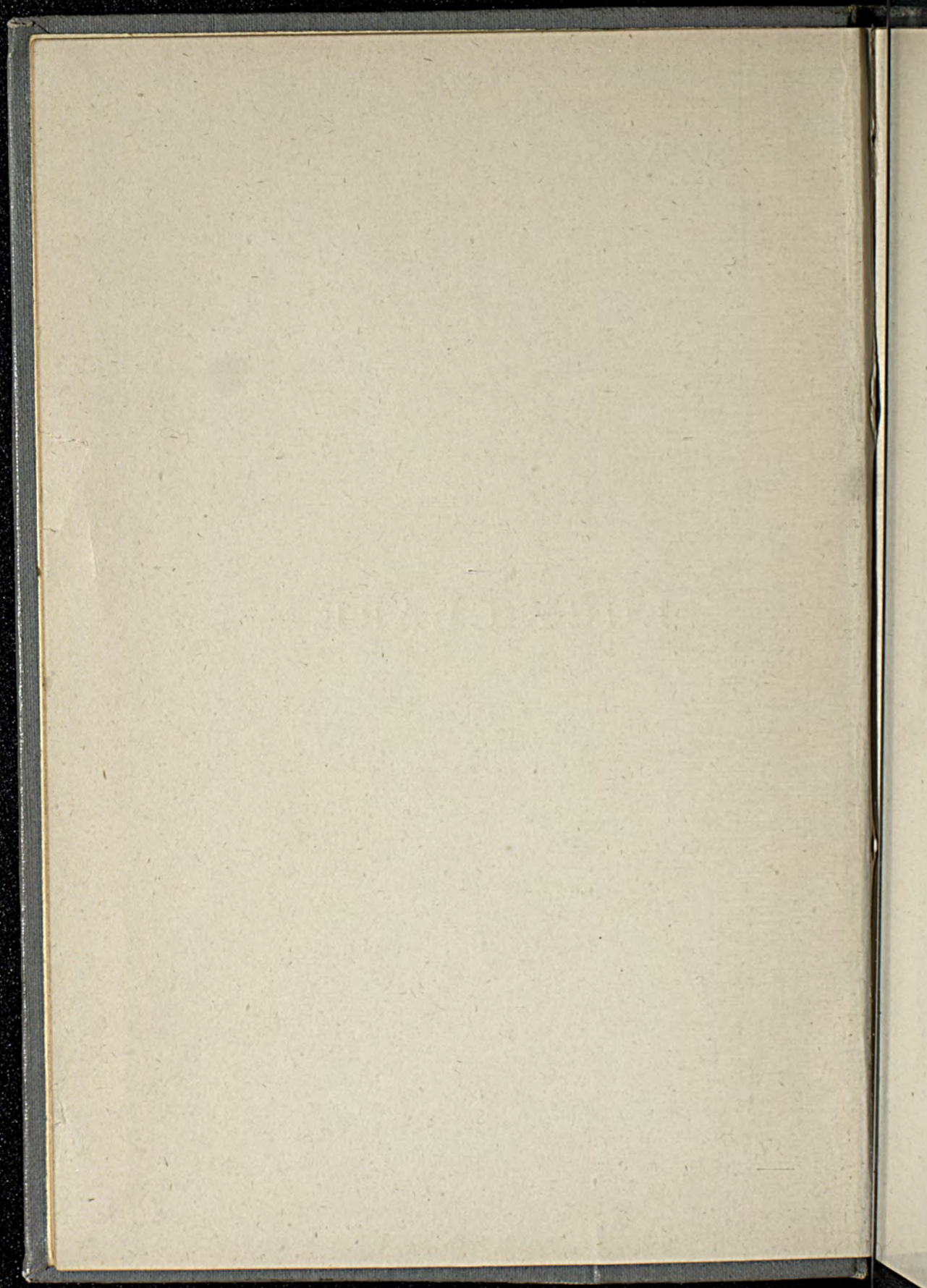
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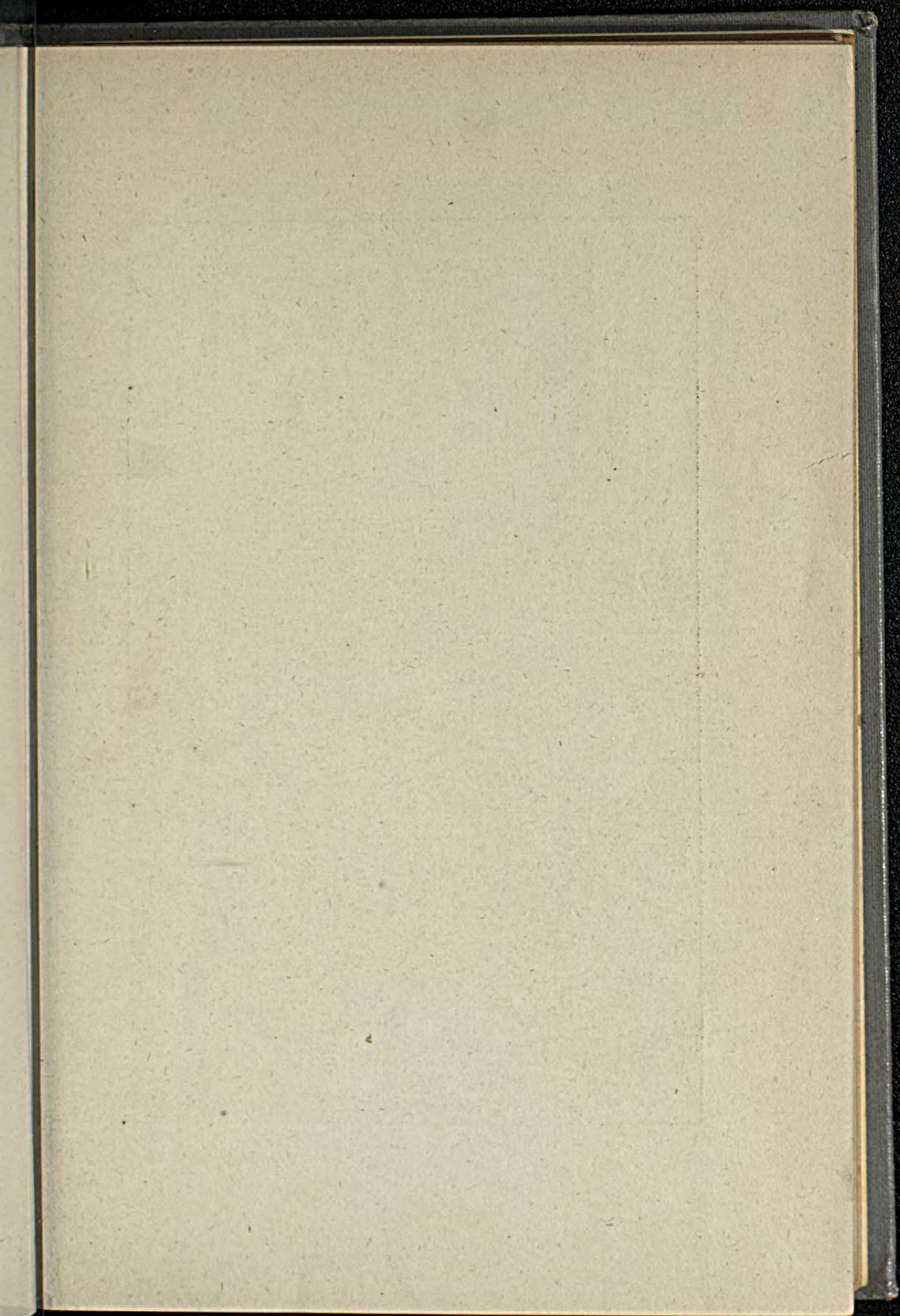
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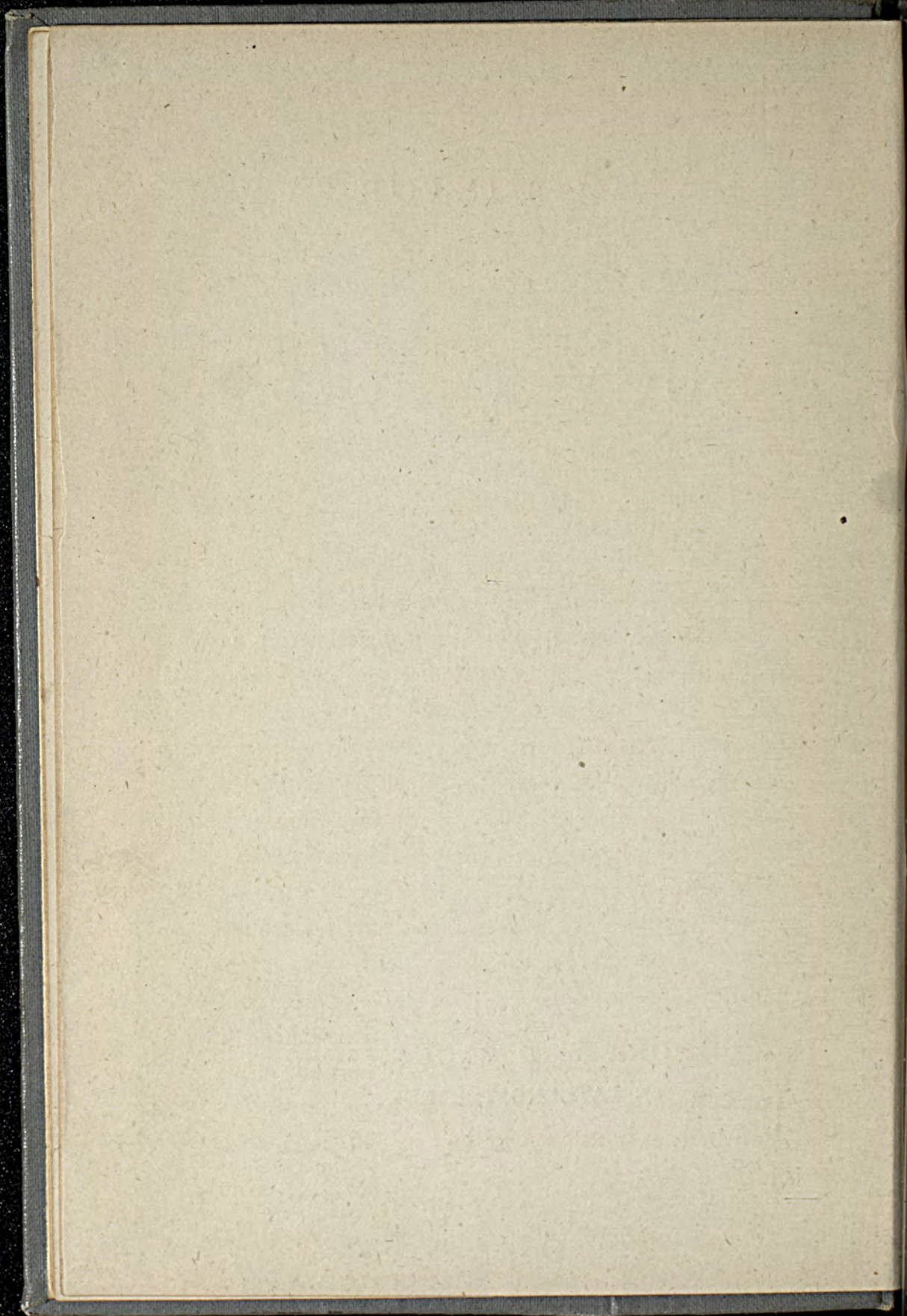
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THE HISTORY
OF
LUCY CLARE.

BY
MRS. SHERWOOD,
AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF SUSAN GRAY," ETC.

London:
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THE HISTORY OF LUCY CLARE.

CHAPTER I.

AS it hath been reported to me, that the story of my beloved daughter, Susan Gray (who departed this life nearly twenty years since), has met with the approbation of many of my Christian brethren, and more especially of such as have daughters growing up; I am tempted, although now getting far in years, to impart to my friends the History of Lucy Clare, as it was related to me by a dearly beloved brother in the ministry, shortly before his death.

From this story which I am about to relate, it will appear, that the trials with which the Lord was pleased to exercise Lucy Clare, were not less difficult to be endured than those of Susan Gray, although entirely of another kind. But both of these young women were "strengthened in the Lord, and walked in His name;" so

that we, "seeing their good works," have much reasons, on their account, to "glorify their Father which is in heaven:" for they were "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works" (Zech. x. 12; Matt. v. 16; Ephes. ii. 10). And thus, having made known to my readers who I am, and for what cause I again put pen to paper, I proceed to relate in what manner I became acquainted with the History of Lucy Clare.

In the vale of Teme, and about ten miles down the stream below my parish, is the Rectory of S——, which was formerly held by a very old and dear friend of mine. I think I may presume to say of him, that he was a disciple whom the Lord loved, and one who always leaned on his Master's bosom (John xiii. 23). He was for many years a kind neighbour to me, and ever ready to obey my call in time of need. Nor did we ever meet but he made it a season of unusual joy—a sort of holiday-time in the family, as my children used to say, who were never weary of hearing the many pleasant and profitable relations with which he entertained us. And truly he had a rare and exquisite memory, taking hold of such things as were beautiful, holy, and pro-

fitable, and passing by such things as were otherwise; insomuch that I could have no doubt of his speaking under the influence of a divine remembrance (John xiv. 26).

The last time I saw him will be eleven years next midsummer. Having surely some foresight that he should not long be spared to those who loved him on earth, he sent me a letter, to say that he would come with his wife, God being willing, to pay me a visit before he was summoned to set out upon his journey home (for that was his manner of speaking of death).

I was well pleased to receive this letter; and still more so, when I saw him the next day ride up to the garden-gate, with the good old lady, his wife, on the pillion behind him. Those twelve days which this good old couple spent at my house, were the happiest which I expect to see on this side of the grave; for I had all my children at home with me at that time, and my poor wife was then living.

My good old friend had a mortal disease on him at the very time, notwithstanding his cheerfulness. He was, as it were, "waiting" on the very brink of the river of death, ready for the messenger who was to call him hence; his

thoughts were all heavenwards, and his conversation there already (Phil. iii. 20). Yet he had not lost his relish for such of the lovely works of his Heavenly Father as are exhibited upon earth; having learned, through faith, to see clearly the invisible glories of another world, through the visible beauties of the present (Rom. i. 20).

On the morrow after his arrival, I showed him my hop-yards and orchard, with the trees which I had planted many years before, when we were both young men; while my wife took the old lady into her dairy and poultry-yard, and from thence into her garden, where she particularly pointed out her beds of tulips, and her favourite rose bushes. Not that we were proud, I humbly trust, of those good things which God for a season had lent us; but being enriched in all things, to all bountifulness, we had daily cause for thanksgiving to God.

After we had shown our friends all that was worthy of notice about our house and garden, I would have them the next day to go with me into the church, which stands on the same hill with the parsonage, but considerably higher. After walking through the church, we sat down

in the porch, the day being remarkably warm and pleasant.

Now, perhaps through the whole lovely vale of Teme, there is not one spot from which a finer prospect may be seen, than from my churchyard : such variety is seldom found in one view, of hill and dale, sloping lawns, waving woods, orchards (at that time of the year bending with fruit), hop-yards, fields of corn, and flowery meadows ; through which Teme, winding her silver stream, may be traced all the way by rows of willows, with here and there a water-mill ; farmhouses, with their corn and hay-ricks ; thatched cottages, enclosed in little gardens and deep woody dingles, from whence, in the summer season, proceeds the voice of the ring-dove.

My old friend had often seen this fair prospect before : but as this day he sat in the church-porch, his poor palsied limbs being warmed and refreshed by the sun, and all the beautiful works of his Divine Master being spread out before him, not with a sparing hand, but in the richest profusion, he seemed more delighted than ever with the lovely view ; and as he gazed, he broke forth in the praises of that Divine Power by which all these things were

created, and of that goodness by which they were made thus exquisitely fair; and never did I hear him speak in a more animated manner. Looking first at the fair landscape at a distance, and then at the graves and tomb-stones nearer to him, and addressing my children, he said, "My dear young ones, you see those beautiful works of God spread out before you, as far as your eyes can reach, above and below: but know, that among these graves and clods of earth, lie the seeds of a fairer creation than that world of beauties which now meets your eyes: 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. So man lieth down, and riseth not, till the heaven be no more' (John xii. 24; Job xiv. 12). Those among our departed brethren here, who died in the Lord, will revive in Him, as it is written, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead' (Isaiah xxv. 19). How truly glorious and beautiful will they appear, who shall then awake in the likeness of their Lord! (Psalm xvii. 15). If the sinful world before us

hath so much beauty, oh, how infinitely fairer will the sinless world be!" Then, turning to my youngest son, he asked him, what it behoved him to seek above all earthly things. Upon my son's hesitating, he took up his own question, and answered it thus:

"That which it behoves us by all means to pursue on earth is, the recovery of the image of God: that glorious image originally stamped on man, but defaced by sin. We are taught by Scripture, that the opportunity of recovering this lost image is allowed only in the present life. This opportunity once lost, is lost for ever.

"There's no repentance in the grave,
Nor pardons offered to the dead."

He then proceeded to point out the only means of salvation offered to man: which is the purifying blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by His sacrifice once offered, procured us a free pardon, and purchased for us that glorious gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby man is sanctified throughout, his very body becoming the temple of the Holy Ghost, and his members the members of Christ. So that, being led by the Spirit, the renewed man brings forth all the fair fruits of holiness: and when his body, which is become a

member of Christ, is laid in the grave, the mystical union of the dying member with its ever-living Head is not dissolved. For death has no power to separate Christ and His people; since our Lord Himself hath expressly said, "It is the will of God, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 40). "Therefore, my dear son," continued my friend, "lose not a moment, delay not till to-morrow, to take hold of this great 'salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory' (2 Tim. ii. 10). How happy are those who, having walked with God on earth, are fallen asleep in Jesus! We have known many, since we came into this country, who have fought the good fight," added he, looking at me, "and who now rest from their labours."

This led me to point out the several graves of those of my parishioners concerning whose state I had the best hope, judging according to man's judgment. Among these were the graves of James and Mary Gray, together with that of their daughter Susan, marked by the white stone which my Lady West had caused to be inscribed to her memory.

“The name of Susan Gray, and her triumph, through divine grace, over the snares of sin and Satan,” said my friend, “reminds me of an account which a poor woman in my parish gave me of herself, when near death. This happened some years ago; but the story is still as fresh in my memory as if I had heard it only yesterday: so, if you please, I will relate it to you this evening while we sit round your table. And as you are a ready penman, if you are so minded, you may commit it to paper, for the benefit of other young women who may meet with the like trials.” Accordingly, that same evening, my friend related the tale, which I, with the help of my son, committed to paper before his departure; and I am glad that I did so, as the example it exhibits may be profitable to young persons.

CHAPTER II.

“**T**HERE is in my parish,” said my good old friend, “at some distance from the church and village, as well as from any high-road, a very deep valley, rendered shady by the coppices and orchards growing upon the declivity of the hill on both sides. At the mouth of this valley runs the river, and near it in the bottom is a high rock, from which falls a stream of very clear and cold water.

“When I first came to my living, there were two black timbered cottages standing upon the shelving parts of this rock; one of which was much above the other, each having a sloping garden, with flowers, and fruit trees, and bee hives; a few hops were also cultivated in these gardens, which crept about the rock, and hung down from the highest parts of it.

“One of these cottages still remains, having been lately repaired; but the other (which was the higher of the two) was inhabited only for a few years after my coming, and is now fallen to ruin, that it cannot be used even as a stable for cattle.”

“In the lowest of these cottages lived a person of the name of Lucy Clare. When I first came to the living she was still a young and comely woman, and in her countenance there beamed a soul renewed by grace. She had the charge of two orphan girls, towards whom she acted the part of a most tender mother, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

“My wife and I, not unfrequently, on a summer’s evening, would take a walk to see Lucy Clare, and would sit and talk with her, in her little neat and beautiful cottage. Her conversation was wonderfully pleasing, and abounded with pious sentiments, for she seldom spoke of worldly matters. It appeared that she had received an education above the common sort ; but we never knew her history, till her last illness, when she, at different times, related to us the whole of her simple story : for her last illness, being a lingering one, afforded me many opportunities for prayer and conversation with my departing neighbour. She was not forty years of age at her death ; and, as I before remarked, she was to the last a very comely woman. But I proceed to her own account of herself.”

LUCY CLARE'S ACCOUNT OF HERSELF.

My father and uncle, said Lucy Clare (strange as it may appear), came from the north country, on foot, to offer their help to King James, who, as they had been told in their own land, was very ill used by his disloyal subjects in England.

They were both very young men when they set out from the place of their birth, and were withal very poor; but they imagined that they might do much for their king, with the stout staves they brought with them.

Now, as they travelled through this part of the country, the younger brother fell sick: upon which the elder, having lodged him upon some hay in a barn, went from house to house to beg for him a morsel of bread. But many refused him this charity, because they loved not the king in whose cause he came to fight; for the stranger would not conceal who he was, nor the purpose for which he came to England.

At last he wandered into this valley, and came to the little cottage above, where an old man of the name of South then lived, upon a small farm. This old gentleman was a very good man: and although he could not take the

part of King James, because he said his prayers to saints and images (as they do even now in many countries), yet being very sorry for these poor young men, he sent for the brother that was sick, and lodged them both in his house.

And now, before the younger brother got well (for he lay a long time), King James went out of England, and William, Prince of Orange, was chosen in his place: one who, I have heard my mother often say, was well worthy of his high calling. So, as my father and uncle could do nothing for the prince they loved, they were content to stay with the old man as servants. He used them very kindly, as I have often been told, teaching them to read their Bible, and to love their good King William, because he served the true God in the way which he has commanded us to do.

Now these young men behaved so well in the service of Mr. South, that at the end of a few years he gave his only daughter to be the wife of the elder, whose name was James; and his son-in-law continued to live with him until the good old man's death.

The younger brother, who was my father, some time afterwards took this house, in which

we now are, together with a few acres of land; and his conduct was so prudent, that the curate of an adjoining parish gave him his eldest daughter to wife. My mother had no portion; but, being a woman of piety, "her price was far above rubies" (Prov. xxxi. 10).

I do not remember my uncle or father; one died before I was born, and the other immediately after. I had an elder brother of the name of Charles, a very dutiful son in all respects but one; he would be a soldier, contrary to his mother's wish: and, when I was about seven years of age, he was killed in some far-distant land, fighting for his country.

A year after his death, one of his fellow-soldiers brought my mother his sash and gloves, which he, at the point of death, had requested might be conveyed to her, with his filial duty; begging, at the same time, her pardon for his disobedient behaviour. He died, it was said, calling upon his Redeemer.

Now, as we had no near neighbours, and my father, uncle, and brother were no more, I seldom saw any person in my early childhood but my aunt—who lived in the house where her father and husband had dwelt—my mother, and an old

man, who was servant to my aunt : and I had no young companion except my aunt's only son, who was a few years older than myself, and who bore his father's name, James M'Clare, or Clare, as we now call it.

In my infant years, when my mother and aunt were from home in harvest-time, or busied with their dairies or their spinning-wheels, this my beloved cousin had the care of me, and many a strict charge was given him by my kind parent, not to suffer me to go near the sloping edge of the rock, or to play by the brink of the water which pours down from the hills above.

Those were happy days ; for, being separated from the world, we knew nothing of its cares and troubles ; and, being kept out of temptation, we enjoyed the pleasures of childhood, without any consciousness of the sin that dwelt in us (Rom. vii.). As we advanced in years, having no other companions, we naturally loved each other as brother and sister. My mother, by the blessing of God on her father's instructions, had acquired a deep knowledge of the corruption of the human heart, with very clear and affecting views of Gospel truth. More especially she had formed a large experimental acquaintance with the love of

Christ, in giving Himself to redeem us from the curse of the broken law; and with the power of the Holy Spirit to renew our corrupt nature, and to produce in our hearts the lovely fruits of obedience to the will of God. How sweetly was she accustomed to talk with me on a Sunday evening, even when I was a very little child, upon heavenly things! And in how pleasing a manner would she hold up to my views those pious men and women of old, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens;" of those, also, who "were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy);" who "wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Hebrews, xi. 33-34, 36—38). These sacred stories used to make my heart burn within me. But when she endeavoured to describe the miraculous manner in which "God was manifest in the flesh, justified

in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16) ; when she unfolded the wonderful means by which mercy and truth met together, while justice and peace kissed each other (Psalm lxxxv. 10), my heart by the grace of God, was often so much melted under a sense of the Redeemer's love, as to draw floods of tears from my eyes.

When I was about eight years of age, I went every day, with my cousin James, to a small school which was then kept in the village about two miles from this place. And I even now remember with pleasure, that I used to repeat to him, as we walked along, many of those good things which I had heard from my mother ; for he had not enjoyed those advantages with which my gracious God had favoured me.

His mother was a well-meaning woman ; but her judgment was so weak, that she allowed her son, for the most part, to take his own way, scarcely restraining him in anything : which false kindness proved, indeed, to be fatal cruelty to him. Our dear James, whose memory I must always love, was not, indeed, worse disposed than other children ; but this temper, which was by nature

fiery, becoming daily more impetuous and violent, laid the foundation of those sorrows which embittered all his after-life. With what truth does the wise man say, "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest!" (Proverbs xxix. 17). His anger was, indeed, soon over; but, alas! we may grievously offend God in a single moment of passion, and cut off all our hopes of happiness on this side of the grave.

He often listened to me with delight, when, as he walked through the woods and meadows to the school, I repeated to him, as well as I was able, such of the pious lessons I had received from my mother as my young mind could retain. He would sometimes even hearken to me, and be influenced by me, after rejecting the control of every other person. He was, indeed, seldom otherwise than kind and gentle to me; and though his hot and hasty manner frequently gave me pain, yet in tenderness to me he would many times check his angry passions.

We had each of us a garden upon the rock; and it was the custom with us to present our most beautiful flowers to each other. He had one year nursed with care, in a sunny spot, a root of most sweet violets, hoping that he should

have some to give me on my birthday, on which day I should be thirteen years of age. On the morning of that day, he led me to his garden, and stooping to pluck the violets which lay hid beneath the green leaves, he found that they had not (as he hoped they would have done) unfolded their purple blossoms. The colour rose in his cheek, and in his anger he plucked up the root, and tore it in a thousand pieces. "Ah, James," I said, "what have you done? A mischief that you never, never can undo. Remember what the old song says:

'For violets plucked, the sweetest showers
Can ne'er make grow again.'

"Why do you look so vexed, my dear Lucy?" he said becoming gentle in a moment. "It was because the violets were not ready for you, on your birthday, that I was so angry."

"Ah," said I "perhaps, at some future time, you will have greater reason than you have now to be sorry for these fits of passion. But if you love me, my dear James, remember this—that in a moment of anger or haste, you may pluck up your happiness, as you have now plucked up this flower, and wish in vain, as you perhaps now do, that it would bud and bloom again."

Seeing a tear come into my eye, he seemed much distressed; and lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven, he prayed that God would grant him power to subdue his angry and sinful passions.

CHAPTER III.

IT had been planned by our parents from our earliest infancy, that if we liked each other when we came to a proper age, I was to become James's wife. But this subject was never spoken of before us ; yet it was evident to all, that his affection for me daily increased. Notwithstanding, he showed not his regard by vain and flattering speeches, nor by any idle discourse, but treated me with respect, even when he was most cheerful. And he did this, I hope, not only to please me, but because he believed that purity of heart was necessary to real happiness, here as well as hereafter, according to our Lord's own declaration, "Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8). We never failed to go to church twice every Sunday ; and on a week-day, when our daily work was done, he would read the Bible to us, while I was busied with my spinning-wheel.

On a Sunday evening, we occasionally took most pleasant walks among the woods, upon the hills, and in the meadows by the river-side ; talk-

ing of holy and heavenly things, and sometimes of the days when we should be old, and when we should look back upon our youth with a sorrowful remembrance of all our faults, our vanities, and follies; still calling to mind, with delight, those hours in which we were enabled to walk as in the presence of God: it was, indeed, at that time our joint wish "so to number our days, that we might apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm xc. 12). Oh, wherefore should young men and women, when they meet together, imagine it possible to prove their love for each other by vain if not wicked discourse? Why should they forget these words of the Holy Bible? "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit" (Ephes. iv. 29-30).

Why should immortal beings forget that they *are* immortal, and think and discourse only of the corrupt things of this world? I thank my God that, through his grace I never, by suffering any vain or light discourse, misled and injured the immortal soul of the dear companion of my early happy days.

But I run too much into length ; it is sufficient to say, that my days passed most pleasantly away, till my cousin James had nearly completed his twentieth year, at which time James asked my mother if she would grant him permission to make me his wife, and received this answer : that if he behaved well, and continued in the same mind till he was twenty-one years of age she should prefer him for a son-in-law to every other person. About this time my aunt died, which caused me to shed many tears ; and I also had not unseldom cause of sorrow to find that James had not conquered the impatience of his temper.

For sometimes he would fancy that I did not love him, but liked some other person better than himself ; and then he vowed that he would leave his country, and go beyond sea, and never return again ; and sometimes he would show undue anger against poor William the old man who had been his mother's servant, and who now took the charge of his house, and helped him to manage his little farm.

But, as he soon forgot his anger, and always was sorry for it when it was over, and as he seemed really desirous to become in all respects a real Christian, I hoped that, through divine grace,

he would, in time, be enabled to conquer his fiery temper, and that he would at length become all that we could wish him to be.

About this time, the old miller that lived by the river-side died, and there came from the town of Worcester another person who took the mill. He was a rich man, and bore no ill character; but he had one daughter, whom he loved to so foolish a degree, as to deny her nothing that she wished for. She had lost her mother in very early days, and having had no one to restrain her when she lived in the town, she had spent her time in dressing herself gaily, in looking out of the windows, and walking in the streets. And now that she came to live in the country, while her father was busied in the mill, she went from house to house gossiping and talking with her neighbours in the village: nor did she follow the good example which her father set her of giving away what could be spared to the poor; for he was by no means a hard man. But, perhaps, I do wrong in speaking thus ill of that young woman! God forbid that I should glory over poor Sally Page, or think myself better than she was; for who made me to differ from another? (1 Cor. iv. 7).

On the Sunday morning after Miller Page came into our parish, James and I went together to church. It was mid-summer, and I remember that the day was fine. James gathered some wild roses in the church lane as we passed. When we came into the church (the clergyman not being yet come), we sat down in our proper places, and I employed myself in looking out the psalms and lessons for the day; when suddenly my cousin whispered me, "Look, Lucy! see what a fine lady has come into the church! It is Sally Page, the Miller's daughter: is she not very smart, and very pretty too?"

I was vexed both with his manner and the place he had chosen for this discourse, and begged him to be silent.

"Nay, but," answered he, "do only look up for once she is just opposite to you, and I promise you that you never saw so smart a lass before."

To satisfy James, I looked up; and much surprised was I to see so fine a lady. She was a handsome, tall young woman, with black eyes, and cheeks as red as a rose: and yet there was something in her appearance altogether which I did not like; for she was dressed above her station, and seemed to have a bold free air. She

wore a straw hat with cherry-coloured ribbons, and a silk gown, with a hoop, and lace apron, and ruffles, and a string of glass beads about her neck.

"Well," said my cousin, looking hard in my face, "how do you like her, Lucy? is she not handsome?"

"I will tell you what I think of her by and by," said I; "this is no time for talking." And I remember that I felt vexed.

When we were coming out of the church, Sally Page came up to my cousin, and calling him by his name, asked him how he did. He smiled and looked pleased, and thanking her, answered that he was very well.

When James and I were quite out of every one's hearing, I said to him, "Now, cousin, I will answer the question you asked me in the church about the miller's daughter."

"Do, Lucy," said he, "tell me whether you like Sally Page."

"I cannot say," I replied, "that I altogether like her looks: I never think it a very good sign when a young woman is dressed above her station: it leads one to suppose—"

"To suppose what?" asked he hastily.

"Why, I do not like to say what, lest you should think me too severe upon my neighbours," I replied.

"Indeed, I shall not think you so, Lucy," he answered ; "so speak out without fear."

"Why," said I, "when a young woman pays too much attention to her dress, and spends too much money upon it, one cannot but think that all this care, and pains, and expense is for no other purpose than to make herself admired and looked after by the young men."

"Well ! and do not all women," said he rather warmly, "wish, above all things, to be admired by the men ? Is it not natural to them ?"

I looked at him, when he spoke these words with a look of sorrow. "Alas ! James," I said, "what you intimate is true ; it is too natural for us to act thus, since we are all by nature sinful ; but as we are required by the Word of God to resist and subdue our sinful inclinations, we ought neither to allow them in ourselves, nor to approve of them in our neighbours."

"Ah ! my beloved Lucy," said he, "I see that I have grieved you ; pardon your James this time, and you never again shall hear such words from his mouth. Women, and men too, are, I

know, by nature vain and proud, and in every way inclined to sin ; but I must not forget what I early learned in my catechism—that although we are born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are made by grace the children of God.”

On hearing these words come from his lips, I smiled, and forgot my displeasure ; while, as he gathered some flowers, and tied them up in a bunch to carry them to my mother—knowing that by any kindness to her he should best please me—he added, that he was sorry he had made any acquaintance with Sally ; declaring at the same time, that he would henceforth keep as much out of her way as possible.

“ But how, my dear James, did you make this acquaintance,” I asked, “ since it is scarcely one week since her father came to the mill ? ”

“ On Thursday,” he replied, “ you may remember, I took some corn to be ground. The miller was not at home ; and while I waited his return, Sally opened a window of the house, which is opposite the mill, and stood there for some time, looking about her.”

“ Go on,” I said, “ go on, James ; ” but I could not help sighing.

“ Ah ! ” said he, “ I shall make you angry

again, but I will tell you all. I shall be more happy when you know it. Sally at length saw me as I stood leaning against the mill door, which was shut ; and having looked at me for the space of a minute, she called to me and asked me what I wanted. I told her my business ; and she invited me into the house, to wait till her father should return."

"And did you go in ?" said I.

"I did," replied he, looking sorrowfully upon the ground ; "and there I stayed, in discourse with her, full two hours. She gave me two cups of cider, with spice in them, and talked to me so condescendingly and graciously, that I, for a short time, forgot you, my dear Lucy, and praised Sally's beauty ; saying many foolish things to her, unworthy of a true Christian."

When I heard this story, I could not help shedding tears ; but James soon comforted me, by promising that he would, in future, be more cautious, and would keep from all company which might tempt him to do wrong.

In the evening of that day, as I was sitting with James and my mother on a bench before the door, hearkening with much pleasure to her pious discourse, suddenly our peace was disturbed

by the loud voices of men and women, who as they climbed the path which led round the rock to our cottage, were laughing loud, and singing unholy songs, as if they did not even know that the day was God's day.

"There," said my mother, "are some young folks who are going, no doubt, to the wake at the village above. Alas! it is a sad thing to think how many people profane God's holy day, and thus too often destroy their own souls."

While my mother was still speaking, these riotous persons came in view. There were two young women, the daughters of a farmer in the parish; the son of the hostess of the Red Lion, near the bridge which crosses the river in the village; a young tailor; and Sally Page.

Sally and the young man from the Red Lion ascended the hill arm in arm; but as soon as they came opposite to our house, and Sally saw my cousin, she drew her arm from her companion; and standing for some moments looking at James, "Your humble servant, James Clare," she said, "who would have thought of seeing you here?" James arose, and coloured, but made no answer. "We are going to the wake at the next village; will you be of the party?" said she, "Come, we

are to be very merry, they say, and all our neighbours are gone."

James stepped forward; then standing still, and looking at me, "Shall I go, Lucy?" he said.

"As you please," I answered, looking gravely.

He then turned to Sally, and said, "I thank you, but I cannot come; it is not in my power."

"What! your sister does not choose you should!" said she, laughing. "Ask her if she too will come with us. We shall be glad of her company."

James looked at me, as if he would have persuaded me to go; but I thanked Sally for her invitation, and begged that she would excuse me.

"Well, you will not prevent your brother's coming, I hope?" she said.

"My cousin," I answered, "is at liberty to do as he thinks right."

"What! you are not his sister?" replied she, looking very hard at me; "well, do as you please, I shall say no more." Then, taking the young man's arm again—"Come," she said, "we shall be late." As she turned towards a stile, over which the young people had passed before, we heard her say, "That James Clare is a fine

lad; I wonder that he should like to mope himself with those dull folks yonder."

After Sally and her party were gone, we sat for some time silent, and James was very grave, therefore, to amuse him, I sang his favourite hymn, and afterwards read a few chapters in the Bible, which entertained him so well, that when it was time to retire, "My dear Lucy," he said, "I am very glad that I did not go to the wake; for I am sure I should not have spent so happy an evening there, as I have done here with you and my aunt. And I should have been uncomfortable, too, at the thought of having offended my God, and profaned His Sabbath."

About twelve o'clock that night, my mother and I were awakened by the loud voices of the party coming back from the wake. As they passed by the cottage-door, we heard the young men swear, and sing scraps of drunken songs; while the young women laughed and screamed. When I heard this, I was much greived, and I prayed God to keep me, and all such as were dear to me, from the company of those who depart from God.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM that day, for some weeks, I saw no more of Sally, only now and then at church; nor did she take much notice of James, becoming at that time very fond of the young man at the Red Lion.

I was now very happy, and at morning and evening, when I went into the meadows and orchards to milk my cows, I used to sing as I went along, for gladness of heart.

But at length our Wake Sunday came, and James said, after we had been at church in the evening, that he would just run down to the village, and take one peep at what was passing; "and I will be back again, Lucy," he added, "time enough to drive up your cows into the field to be milked." Now, as he was a young man, and I thought led rather a dull life with me and my aged mother, I could not find in my heart to oppose his going.

Yet, before we parted, I besought him, as he loved me, to keep out of all bad company, and on

no account whatever to be tempted to drink; reminding him of St. Paul's exhortation, which every man should remember as a general rule in the hour of temptation: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephes. v. 11).

He promised that he would not run into any mischief; and as I saw him hasten down the path from our cottage towards the village, I prayed God to be with him.

But the hour of milking came, and James did not return. My mother was not well that evening. I gave her some warm cider and a toast of white bread, and helped her to bed at about nine o'clock. I then shut the cottage door, and hastened up to the house above, to ask old William if James was come home; but the old man shook his head, and said. "Mistress, if you expected him so early from the wakes, it proves how little you know of the ways of young men."

"How so, William?" said I, as I sat by the old man on the bench, under the great walnut tree, which still stands at the door of the little cottage above.

"What should you know, my pretty mistress," said the old man, "of the ways of the world and

of men? You who have always lived, as one might say, under the shade of a tree. You do not know how desperately wicked the world is, and what hard trials are in the way of young men—ay, and of young women too—when they go out into it, it is next to an impossible thing for a young man to mix with his fellow-creatures, if it be but at a village wake, without falling into sin.”

When I heard William talk so, and thought of my dear James, I could not help shedding tears; which, when he saw, “Take comfort, my dear mistress,” said he; “for although this may not be possible with man, yet with God all things are possible; and God’s grace will, I humbly hope, be with my young master, wherever he may go.”

“God grant it may be so, William,” I said, with a deep sigh; and I clasped my hands together, and looked up to heaven; the sun was then set, and the moon began to appear above the hills, while thousands and thousands of bright stars were shining overhead. “Oh!” I said, “I wish that time were at hand, when we shall be removed from this wicked world, and all its hard temptations; and when, through the merits of

our Redeemer, we shall be made for ever happy in a land of pure delight, far beyond those glittering stars."

While I was yet speaking, William cried out, "If my old eyes do not deceive me, I see some one coming over the field; look, mistress, at the stile just by the garden gate." I turned my eyes to the place which the old man pointed out, and, by the light of the moon, immediately knew my own dear James. I was at the moment rejoiced to see him; but soon my joy was turned into the most bitter grief; for, as he came nearer, I discovered by his reeling motion and unequal steps, that he was—alas! oh, shame to tell! that he was in a state of intoxication. He scarcely seemed to know either William or me; but as soon as he reached the cottage, he threw himself on the bench at the door, from which I had just risen in haste.

"Why, how now, master!" said old William, "though, indeed, this is no more than I looked for; but how, I wonder, did you find your way over the fields in this state?"

James made no answer; but presently began to take the name of his Maker in vain, and in half-broken words, to rail at a young man, who

had, as I afterwards found, kindly dragged him away from the miller's house, into which he had been tempted by Sally, who was making merry (her father being from home) with several young men and women of her acquaintances.

When I heard James, for the first time in my life, take the name of his Maker in vain—when I saw his cheeks flushed with liquor, and his eyes heavy and stupid (for old William had by this time lighted a candle and brought it to the door), I could not refrain from tears. And I thought at that moment how much happier I should have been in following James to his grave, in the precious assurance that he had died in the Lord his Redeemer, than thus to see him lower than the brute beast by drunkenness, which God abhors.

When by the light of the candle he saw who I was, he took my hand, and began to talk to me in such a free and bold manner, as he would have blushed to use had he been sober; but I drew my hand out of his, and, turning from him, ran speedily down the path to my mother's house. I spent the remainder of that night in tears and prayers for my unhappy James.

The next morning, as I sat at work by my

mother, he, as his custom was, came in to bid us good-day. I had hidden my grief and the cause of it from my mother, as she was still very unwell: she therefore received him with her usual kindness, but it was not so with me.

When he came in I looked another way, and seemed busy with my spinning-wheel. He strove to appear as usual before my mother, and to talk to her as if nothing had happened; but I more than once perceived that he sighed and smiled, and looked at me, hoping in vain that I would smile again.

I could not, however, so soon forget the crimes which he had committed; he had profaned the Sabbath, taken the name of God in vain, and been guilty of great intemperance.

"Shall I do anything for you, Lucy, to-day?" he said, as he was taking his leave. "Shall I cut up some wood for you? or carry some water? or gather some plums from the old tree?"

"You can do nothing for me, I thank you," I answered gravely.

"Nothing!" repeated he, looking earnestly in my face; "are you quite sure?"

I shook my head; for my heart began to soften, and I could not speak one word.

About noon, while I was busy in the dairy, he called again, and brought my mother some summer apples from his garden, in the crown of his hat; he laid the apples on the table, and went out of the house without venturing to inquire for me.

In the evening he called again, to ask if he should bring up the cows to be milked; but my mother told him that I had been gone some time down to the meadow with my pail on my head; so he returned home, and we saw him no more that night. Oh, how very sad was I during all this time! yet the thought that I was doing my duty was a very great comfort to me; and the hope that my anger might make my dear cousin sensible of his great offence against God afforded me much support under my grief.

In this manner for several days I avoided the company of my dear James, and seemed to keep up my anger against him, till, I think, it was Wednesday evening. The day had been very hot: it was the month of August. At the hour of milking, I took my pail upon my head and went down into the meadow to look for the cows. When I reached the meadow, I saw no cows; but there was a gap in the hedge, through

which I supposed they had made their way into the lane hard by.

I went into the lane, but saw them not ; it was very hot, the sun being still high in the heavens. I was much tired, having worked hard during the day ; and my grief was greater than my weariness : so, having wandered near half a mile along the lane, I at last sat down upon the bank by the roadside, and began to shed tears. While I remained there, James passed by, on his way from the house of our worthy rector, to whom he had been carrying a few nuts and plums in a basket.

When he came near to me he stood still, and looking very earnestly at me, "My dear Lucy," he said, "why are you here? and wherefore are you so sorrowful?"

At first I made him no answer; upon which, coming nearer to me, and bending down his head, "Nay, do tell me," he said, "do tell your James what grieves you. You know very well, my dear Lucy, in spite of your anger against me, that I love you more than all the world beside, and that I would die to make you happy."

Still I made no answer, for I wished to tell my dear James that I had forgiven him, as I

hoped his God had done; and yet I feared lest I should do wrong, by so soon receiving into favour one who had acted so ill.

"Alas! alas!" said he, "I find that I must still bear your anger, Lucy. You will not speak to me. Oh that I had never given cause to one so gentle and so good to show so much displeasure! But I wish I could tell the reason of your present grief, and wherefore you are here, and why your milk-pails stand empty by you. Where are the cows? Shall I drive them home for you? Have they strayed from the meadow, and are you come in search of them down the lane?" So saying, he set down his basket upon the grass, and hastened from me in quest of the cows.

He soon returned again, driving them before him. "I have found your cows, Lucy," he said, as he came near to me, "and now I hope that you will wipe away those tears; for, indeed, I cannot endure to see you so sad."

"Oh, James," I answered, "you are much mistaken if you think that I grieved for the loss of the cows." His cheeks became of a deeper red than usual while I spoke, and he looked sorrowfully on the ground. "You do not know, indeed you do not," continued I, "how very unhappy

you have made me. You know that I love you, James; that you are dearer to me than any other human being, excepting only my honoured parent. But I must plainly tell you, that my affection for you flowed not from those motives which might lead others to choose you—it was not because you are young that I loved you; nor because you can work for me, and keep me from poverty; nor yet because you are cheerful, and likely to be a pleasant companion in this solitary place; but because I thought that the grace of God was with you.

“It was once a pleasure to me to think of the time when, after having passed through the gates of death, and lain in the cold grave, I might again meet you, as a dear friend, in a better and happier world, where ‘the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.’ (Matt. xiii. 43).

“But, oh, James! how can I hope for such an issue of our mutual attachment, after the proof that you gave me last Sunday of your want of steadfastness? If you suffer yourself to be enticed of sinners, your end will be destruction.”

Before I ceased to speak, he fell upon his knees; and lifting up his hands and eyes to

heaven, he prayed God to forgive him the grievous crime of which he had been guilty. Then, taking my hand, he promised me, if I would love him as I formerly had done, that he never would again give me the like cause for sorrow. "In future," he added, "you shall have no reason, my beloved Lucy, to frown upon and reprove your poor James. He will, from this time forward, endeavour to live constantly in the fear of God."

I prayed God, through His dear Son, to bless him, and really believed that he would keep his good resolutions; for I then knew not, by experience, the deceitfulness of the human heart. I therefore gave him my hand, with a light heart, and we were friends again. Then, having milked the cows, I returned to my little home; where, in the company of James and my dear mother, the day was finished with prayers and a hymn to the praise of our God.

CHAPTER V.

FROM that time I can remember a few more days, perhaps weeks, of happiness, in which my dear James gave me no further cause of sorrow or anxiety; but at length there came to our village a very smart and genteel young man, a sergeant who beats up for recruits in our country, it being war time. He wore a scarlet coat, and a cap with a high feather in it; and he soon became acquainted with Sally Page, and walked with her to church the Sunday after he came to the village.

At church everybody looked at him and admired him; and no one seemed to be more pleased with his appearance than James.

In the evening, when we were sitting round the fire, he said to my mother, "You do not know, aunt, what a handsome and genteel man is come to our village."

"Indeed!" said she, "who may he be?"

"He is a soldier," answered he, "and the smartest I ever saw. You cannot think how

the women seemed to admire him at church to-day ; he has almost made me wish for a red coat. Should not you like me better, Lucy," added he, turning to me, "if I was dressed like the sergeant?"

Before I could make any answer, my mother said, in a very warm manner, "I hope that no daughter of mine will ever bestow her affections on a soldier ; whosoever the man might be, such a circumstance would cause me everlasting regret. So, James, if you choose to wear a red coat, you must either take your leave of Lucy, or make me miserable."

Upon hearing this I looked very grave, nay, the tears came into my eyes ; which James perceiving, took my hand and said, "Come, cheer up, my dear Lucy, and do not be cast down by an idle jest. Do you think that I would take even a crown of gold in exchange for my Lucy's love?"

I thought no more of this circumstance, till a few days afterwards, when the time of the great fair at Worcester arrived. We had a young horse and a few sheep to sell at the fair, and it was necessary that James should take them, William being grown too old for such a service. The

night before he went, my mother exhorted him to be cautious of the company he fell into, and to hasten home as soon as he had finished his business. "Never fear, my dear aunt," he answered, "I shall make all speed to return, and will keep from all bad company."

I followed him to the door when he was going away, and would have repeated all that my mother had before said; but fearing to weary him, I only said, as we parted, "Farewell, dear James, God be with you." The next day, when he was gone, I went down to the village, to carry some eggs to Mrs. Hill, at the Red Lion.

"So," said she, as she took the eggs out of my basket at the door, "your cousin James Clare is gone to the fair to-day in company with Sergeant Browne."

"In company with Sergeant Browne!" I repeated, and turned quite pale, "how did that happen?"

Mrs. Hill looked at me; "Why, Lucy Clare," said she, "how pale yon look! what have I said? Dear! I did not think I should have displeased you. Why, I am sure the sergeant is very good company for any one, and I do not see why your cousin should scorn to be seen with him!"

"But how did it happen," I asked, "that they went together?"

"Happen!" repeated she, rather angrily. "Why, James Clare passed by the door, just as Mr. Browne was setting out; and since they were acquainted before, there was no reason why they should not join company, as both were going one way." So saying, she turned hastily into the house, and I bent my steps sorrowfully towards home.

I cannot find words to say how unhappy I was during all this day, for my heart misgave me, and I felt assured that some ill would befall my dear James; but I hid the matter from my mother, lest I should trouble her with my griefs. In the evening it rained very hard, which my mother said was the cause why James did not return; but I thought otherwise, and so, alas! it proved.

The next day was fine, but the morning wore away, and my cousin came not. In the evening I took my pail, and went with a sad heart into the fields to milk my cows. My way led me by the door of James's house: I called to ask old William if he had heard any tidings of his young master; but the old man shook his head, and

said, "Pray Heaven, no ill may have befallen him."

When I had milked the cows, and was returning slowly along the lane, with many a sad and bitter thought, just as I reached the stile, I heard some one call to me from a little distance. I hastened to put down my milk pail from my head upon the grass, and turning to look behind me, I saw my cousin not far from me, but there was something in his look and manner, as he hastened towards me, which grieved and surprised me.

His eyes looked wild, and his cheeks were pale; a handkerchief was tied loosely about his neck, and he held his hat under his arm.

"I stood still and silent, until he came up to me. He took my hand, as he drew near me, in a hasty manner, and seemed as if he would appear to be glad to see me; but I saw, alas! that his heart was oppressed with sorrow.

He talked much of his joy in returning to me; adding, that when he was parted from me, even for a day, he was always miserable. "Oh, Lucy, Lucy!" he said, "I cannot live without you; and yet I verily believe you do not love me. You are not pleased to see me again:

I thought, on my return, that you would be all joy ; and you say nothing to me, nay, you even look grave and full of sorrow ; perhaps, it would be no evil to you to part with me for ever. You do not love me as I do you ; you would not follow me to far-distant countries, as I would you ; you would not give up all that is dear to you for my sake, as I would for yours."

In this manner he went on for some time, for I was so astonished that I could not utter a word : at last tears began to run down my cheeks, and then I said, "Oh ! do tell me, what does all this mean ? Oh, James, James ! what have you done ? Do you not know how much I always loved—yes, and always shall love you ? although I fear that you have now done some wrong thing, by which you expect to lose my love."

He looked grieved and confused when I said these words, and leaning against the stile, he bent his eyes upon the ground, and sighed very deeply. "Ah ! do tell me," I said, "what has befallen you. Have you done anything amiss ? There is still forgiveness with God."

He made no answer for a long time. At length, suddenly fixing his eyes upon me—and they were brimful of tears—"Would you go with me, dearest

Lucy," into a far-distant country? would you endure poverty, and hardships, and many troubles, for my sake? Oh, answer me! tell me?"

"Are you going into a far-distant country?" I asked; "what do you mean?"

"Only tell me whither you will go with me!" he again said, with great impatience; "whither you love me enough to go through all these hard trials for my sake?"

"Oh! you frighten and grieve me," I answered; "you know that I would do anything for you but forsake my poor old mother."

"What! not for my sake?" he said.

"No not for your sake," I replied.

"Then," he answered "'tis as I thought; you do not love me, Lucy, and I am the most miserable of men."

So saying he was turning from me, with such a look of bitter grief and anger as I cannot describe, when I took hold of his arm, and looking earnestly in his face, said, with many tears, "Oh, my dear, dear James, what does all this mean? What dreadful ill has befallen you? Are you going to leave us for ever? or, do you only take this cruel way to try my love to you? Nay, do tell me."

He sighed very deeply, and, without saying one word, showed me his hat, which till now he had held under his arm; and I saw, by the cockade in it, the cause of all his grief. Sergeant Browne had drawn him in to drink, and while he was in liquor, had persuaded him to become a soldier.

On seeing this dreadful sight, I should have fallen to the ground had he not held me up; the tears ran down my cheeks, and it was long, very long, before either of us spoke one word; but James looked in my face with such a countenance of sorrow as I never shall forget. At length, with a very deep sigh, he said, "And will you forsake me, Lucy, in this my grief? Must we part? No, no, no, you cannot be so hard-hearted? Remember how we have loved each other from our childhood—how we have played together, and taken sweet counsel together."

I lifted up my eyes and hands to heaven. "O God!" I said, "make thy grace sufficient for me: enable me to resist this temptation. I must not forsake my aged mother. My Saviour, who loved me, and died for me, calls me to give up what is most dear to me on earth." Saying these words, I sat myself down on the bank; and leaning my

head on my arm, I wept very bitterly, feeling almost in an agony of grief.

I will not repeat, because it will make my tale too long, all the means which James used to persuade me to break the resolution which I had formerly made to remain with my infirm mother. Sometimes he prayed and supplicated; and sometimes, yielding to anger, he reproached and threatened me; but Heaven gave me strength to endure this hard trial, and to persist in my duty.

When my mother was told what James had done, her grief was very great; but she would not hear of my becoming the wife of a soldier. "No, no," she said to him, "had you remained as you were, you should have had my daughter: but you have now lost her. I could not bear to be parted from her in my old age: these cruel wars have already robbed me of one child, and would you now take the other from me?"

But I will not dwell long upon these sad events. We would have persuaded Sergeant Browne to have set James free for a sum of money the largest we could afford; but the Sergeant was too proud of his recruit to part with him.

Orders came in a few days for the Sergeant

and his men to join the regiment. Oh, my poor James! I shall never forget his grief when he took leave of his dear home. The evening before he was to leave us, we sat round the door of the cottage which opens into the little garden. My dear mother gave him much wise and pious counsel; beseeching him, for the love of his God, to refrain from vicious pleasures, which end in death. "Remember, my son," she said, "that a soldier is bound to fight for his religion and his king, and to honour both: it is, therefore, as much the duty of a good soldier to serve and glorify his God, as to serve and honour his king. And besides," she added, "a soldier should be always prepared for death, and for what may come after death, that he may have no cause for fear when he enters the field of battle; for what is there dreadful in death to a brave man, when heaven is to follow? but when hell is to follow, death must make cowards of us all." She also took occasion to point out to him, that he who is faithful to God can never be really conquered; that he who is found in Jesus triumphs over death itself, and is victorious in the grave.

My dear cousin sighed very deeply, and lamented his own imprudence in a manner which

made my heart bleed. At break of day I arose and accompanied him some way on the road, "When summer comes, my dear Lucy," he said, "I will return to you if Heaven permit; and then, perhaps, your mother will have reconciled her mind to your marrying a soldier." I sighed, "Oh! if you will not have me when I return again," he added, "I shall be sure that you do not love me, and this assurance will break my heart."

To this I made no reply, for what could I answer? But I said, "Pray, remember your promise, and return, my dear James; I shall count the months and the days till summer shall arrive." When we had reached the top of a high hill, over which the road passed, there we parted; for the sergeant and others, who were before, called to James to come on. He gave one sad look back on the country he had left, and having said, "God bless you, my dear Lucy," he left me with a heavy, heavy heart.

I watched him as he went down the hill, and saw, him, more than once, rub the tears from his eyes; and when he was no more in sight, I sat down by the roadside, and very sad I was.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM that hour, for many weeks, and even months, I continued in the deepest sorrow. I could not as yet submit to the chastisements of my heavenly Father; I still persisted to seek happiness from the creature, instead of seeking it from God. Before I had known affliction, my mountain stood strong, and I walked too much in my own strength; but the sore disappointment with which God, in His mercy, now thought fit to try me, discovered to me more deeply the depravity of my heart. Oh, what rebellious thoughts I sometimes entertained; and how long was it before I could say, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth Him good!" (1 Sam. iii. 19). The blessings of our little cottage—quiet, peace, and plenty, together with leisure to serve my God (mercies which I have since most highly prized, and for which I have long blessed the gracious Giver), the sweet discourse of my much-loved mother, and the kindness of the good old William, whom we took to live with us after his young master was gone—these privileges then

afforded me but little comfort. But when I was tempted to neglect my duty towards my parent, I remembered the following text, which she had caused me to learn when a little child, and I was much comforted and encouraged by it: "My son, help thy father in his old age, and grieve him not so long as he liveth; and if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy full strength. For the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten: and instead of sins it shall be added to build thee up. In the day of thine affliction it shall be remembered; thy sins also shall melt away, as the ice in the fair warm weather" (Eccles. iii. 12-16).

In time the tender love of my mother, together with the compassionate dealings of God, brought me much consolation; and I became more contented than I once thought it possible to have been when parted from my dear James. Yet, I still was not taught to seek all my happiness from God, in simple dependency of His sufficiency. My beloved parent most kindly received my attempts to please her; when I was sad, she did all in her power, in the most sweet and gentle manner, to comfort me, and seemed

most tenderly to share my griefs. But I was then too young and thoughtless, to know how much is due from a child to a careful, pious parent. Thus passed away the winter months; and at midsummer James got leave from his regiment, which was then only at Gloucester, to come and see us for a few days.

I had looked forward to his return, in hope of being very happy; but, alas! I was disappointed, for he did not appear to be the same innocent and simple James that he had once been; he was gaily dressed, and seemed rather to despise some of his homely neighbours. For, having been brought up somewhat above the ordinary way, and being able to read and write well, he had been raised to the rank of sergeant; and from his discourse, I found that he was much admired for his handsome appearance in the regiment. He, accordingly, seemed to think highly of himself, and told me, that he doubted not but in time he should raise himself still higher; for many a private soldier, he said, had become a general, and led out armies into the field. His mind seemed to be so full of these high thoughts, that he took not the pleasure he had formerly done, in hearing the Bible, and joining in our family

prayers ; for " God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble " (James iv. 6). And sometimes, from certain words which he dropped, I perceived that he had not that dread of drinking and of other vices which he formerly had shown ; but he was careful of what he said on these subjects before my mother and William.

His love for me seemed, however, to be still the same—nay, if possible, greater than ever—and he was more and more anxious that I should marry him.

I will not enlarge so much as to tell you how many times he besought me to marry him, and go back with him to Gloucester ; how much persuasion he used to prevail with me, and how many tears I shed on the occasion. But, through the restraining grace of God, I still refused to desert my aged mother ; though, when I thought that James must soon leave me, and that I might perhaps never see him again, my heart seemed ready to break.

My mother saw my distress, and never shall I forget her kindness to me at that season. It was the evening before the last day which James had to spend with us ; it had been a day of very severe trial to me, for James had been most

earnestly praying me to ask my mother's consent to our marriage. At her usual hour (which was very early), my mother went to her little chamber. When she had finished her private prayers, she called me to help her into bed, as was her custom. I immediately broke off my discourse with James, and taking a cup of new milk and a crust of bread, of which my dear mother always made her last meal before she laid herself down in the bed, I went up to her, with a heart deeply dejected, and my eyes swollen with tears. My mother was seated on the side of her bed; I placed her little supper on a table near her, and leaning my back against the wall, stood quite silent, while she thus spoke to me.

Before she began, I saw her wipe away a tear, which was running down her cheek, and then looking kindly at me, "My dear Lucy," she said, "I see your grief, and cannot bear it. I perceive what God has required of me. You shall go and be happy with your James. I cannot blame you for the love you bear him; he was your first companion, and the only friend of your childhood; he has some faults, but he has many virtues; and such a wife as you will make (so she was pleased to speak) will confirm him, with

God's blessing, in all that is good, and will gently lead him to correct his faults. I could have wished not to have parted from my children, but to have witnessed their pious lives in this sweet retreat; but it has pleased God, who orders all for the best, to decide otherwise. Go, my child; go to our dear James, and make him happy, by saying that I give my consent, and, with my consent, a mother's blessing." Here she stopped, and, as I have since recollected, seemed much affected; but she tried to look unconcerned, and began to prepare herself for going to rest, while I stood looking at her in such a state of mind as cannot be described.

My heart seemed to be torn in sunder; at one moment, I thought that nothing should tempt me to forsake my aged parent, who was now more dear to me than ever; and the next, I half resolved to go with James. And, no doubt, I should have yielded to this temptation, had I not, although then unknown and unfelt by myself, been restrained by a divine power: glory, therefore, be given to God, who, in the hour of trial, made His grace sufficient for me. "I shall do very well here, with old William," continued my mother, after having been silent for some

time ; “ we will part with some of our farm ; a very little will support us, and God will take care of us. The war, with Heaven’s favour, may be over soon, and James may then be able to get his discharge ; and I shall look forward to my children’s return, to take care of me when I become helpless and infirm, which must unavoidably be the case in a very few years ; but in the meantime, I have no fear of doing very well. Go, therefore, my Lucy, go with your James, and may the Almighty God bless you ! ” While she spoke these last words, she arose from the side of her bed (in order, no doubt, to hide her feelings), and seemed to be busied in folding up a handkerchief she had just taken off ; but her eyesight being too dim distinctly to see the little table on which I had placed her supper, she stumbled against it, and throwing it down, broke the cup which held her milk.

This seeming accident (thus ordered, no doubt, by providence), by drawing my attention to her helpless state, at once opened my eyes to my duty. God enabled me to make that resolution, which I never afterwards changed, nor for one moment repented of. I threw myself upon my knees before my mother, and lifting up my

hands to her, "Never, never," I said, "will I leave you. Your kindness to me, in consenting to part with me, only binds me more closely to you. God forbid that anything on earth should tempt me to forsake you, my beloved mother, in your old age, without one friend to comfort you, but a poor and helpless old man. No, no, my beloved parent, your tender care of me, in my days of infancy, shall not be so rewarded."

My mother now, on her part, used many reasons to persuade me to leave her. She put her arms round my neck, she kissed me, and with many tears besought me to seek my own happiness, and to leave her to the care of Providence.

"No, no," I answered, "God has enabled me to see my duty, and, with the assistance of His Holy Spirit, I will perform it; and to Him I leave the care of my future happiness."

I said no more, but left my mother and returned to James, to tell him what had passed, and the resolutions which I had made; not doubting to convince him that after such a proof of my mother's tender love to us both, it would be most cruel to forsake her.

But he was not at that time in a state of

mind to be convinced by any reasons, however good. It happened that he had overheard most of what had passed between me and my mother; for he was seated near the foot of the stairs, where the door had been left open; and he no sooner saw me, than he charged me with not loving him.

"I now believe," he said, "what, but yesterday, the whole world could not have made me believe—that there is some other person for whose sake you refuse me, and that you make your regard for your aged mother a cloak to hide your falsehood. For now your mother gives her consent—she even entreats you to marry me, and you refuse."

I was silent with astonishment; I did not then know, what I was afterwards told, that he alluded to a young farmer, who lived in the next village, who had, while James was with his regiment, asked me in marriage; but who, on being informed by my mother that I had given my heart to another person, immediately took his leave.

This matter had come no more into my mind, but there was a person, who, having yielded to a love for James, which in his situation was highly

improper, had told this story much to my discredit. James was consequently led to suppose that I refused him for the sake of this young man, who was far richer than himself; and thus crediting a cruel calumny, and giving way to the natural firiness of his temper, he would not hear anything I had to say, but flinging from me, and vowing never to see me again, he left the house.

I called him back, but he would not hear me. I hearkened to his steps as he went down the stony path into the valley; and when I could hear him no more, I sat down on the bench before the door, like one stupified.

It grew every moment more and more dark; old William had retired to rest; all was still and hushed; I heard no sound but the melancholy hootings of the owls in the holes of the rock, and the whistling of the wind among the trees. I thought my beloved James might perhaps return, but it was a false hope: he had left me in anger, and years passed away before I saw him again.

Such a deep-rooted affection as I felt for him could not be at once overcome; yet even in that sad hour I felt such divine consolation as passeth all description, when these comfortable words came strongly into my mind: "There is no man

that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time—and in the world to come eternal life." "Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men!" (Mark x. 29-30; Psalms cvii.)

I remained sitting where James had left me till the dawn appeared ; and then taking my pail, I went into the fields to milk the cows. The cows had broken the hedge, and strayed down the lane, and there was no one to help me to drive them back, or to stop the gap.

I hoped, during the whole of the next day, to have seen James coming back to take his leave of us, persuading myself that our last parting, before he returned to his regiment, would yet be marked with kindness. But I looked for him in vain ; and the next news which we received of him was from Miller Page, who, coming to us in a very great anger, informed us that he had spent the last day with his daughter Sally, and that she had followed him to Gloucester.

The old man called his Maker to witness that he would never more speak to his daughter, not

foreseeing that it would never be in his power to do so ; for she no sooner reached Gloucester than James married her : and not long afterwards she went with him to Portsmouth, where the regiment embarked for foreign service, and Sally never again saw her native country. Some time afterwards, an old soldier, who had been discharged from James's regiment at Portsmouth, as being unfit for service, passed through our village in his way to North Wales; and hearing that James Clare's family were so near, he called upon us, and we entertained him in our little cottage for several days, which was a great comfort and refreshment to the old man. He told us that James, he trusted, would make a brave and a good soldier ; that he understood his duty well, and was thought the finest looking young man in the regiment ; but that it was supposed he was not happy with his wife, who was a gay, dressy woman, and withal had so high and unquiet a spirit, as to deprive the Sergeant of all domestic peace. In addition to which he intimated, that James was disposed to have recourse to what is but too often the soldier's comforter, his bottle—a false and deadly friend, which often proves the destruction both of soul and body.

This account of James and his wife gave us great pain, but did not surprise us. We daily followed them with our earnest prayers; but a length of time passed away before we heard any more of them.

Immediately after James's marriage, we thought it proper to part with the cottage which his father and himself had rented, as well as very much to lessen our own farm, since poor William could now do but little work. We kept only an orchard, which supplied only one cow with grass; and this, with our garden—which was very fruitful—two or three pigs, and a little poultry, gave us full employment. We never wanted milk, bacon, eggs, or vegetables. My mother still could spin and knit, and do some plain needlework; though we might, perhaps (particularly when our fruit failed us), have been a little pinched for our rent, had not an old relation of my mother's, to whom her father had been very kind, left us unexpectedly at his death three hundred pounds—the interest of which not only paid our rent, but supplied my mother and William with many comforts which age requires, such as sugar and tea, a little good beer, which we brewed ourselves, and warm clothing for the winter.

As the remembrance of my disappointment in my dear James became more faint, I grew more and more sensible of the goodness of God towards me, and more and more contented with my little home, and my venerable companions; for I loved our faithful old William in the next degree to my mother. As they grew older and more infirm, their cheerfulness seemed to increase, their piety became more lively, and their faith in their Redeemer more active and effectual; while they daily became more and more grateful to God for His tender care of them, in providing them with so many comforts in their old age.

"We have no reason to look for happiness in this world," my mother would often say; "but God has dealt graciously with us, according to that which is written, 'My people shall dwell in quiet resting places' (Isaiah, xxxii. 18). They who make this world their god, live in a state of perpetual self-deceit, constantly seeking after that happiness which the humble quiet children of God enjoy, in many a retired and lovely solitude, overlooked, and perhaps despised, by the men of this world. The ways of God are wonderful and unsearchable; but His merciful goodness endureth for ever and ever upon them that fear

Him, and His righteousness upon children's children."

Day followed after day, and month after month, so calmly, that seven years were now passed away since our dear unhappy James had left us; and I hardly was aware of the lapse of time. We still thought of him, talked of him and remembered him and his wife in our daily prayers; and the love I had once borne to him was such, that I never could think of marrying any other man. But though I had found it very hard to struggle with my long-cherished affection for him, I could not allow myself to think of him in any other light than a married man, or indulge any other feelings toward him than those of a sister: for I had always been taught to think of the marriage state as a most sacred engagement, and not even in thought to be violated, without offending that God who knows the most secret thoughts of the heart. Yet, although I was still young, I had no wish to marry, or to leave that little cottage, where one day passed sweetly after another; where I daily received the blessing of my aged mother, and saw her enjoying those comforts which, with God's goodness, I was enabled to provide for her.

We began and finished every day with prayer, and reading a few chapters in the Bible ; and while I sat at work in the evening, I often sang hymns and psalms, in which old William and my mother would sometimes join, as well as their age would permit. My mother once had a sweet voice, but it was then much impaired, which she would often remark, saying, that she hoped, through a blessed eternity, to have it in her power to sing, without weariness, the praises of her Redeemer—

But oh, eternity's too short
To utter all His praise !—

“the praises of Him,” she would say, “by the shedding of whose precious blood the heirs of hell become the sons of God.”

Oh the lovely effects of piety, which can make a humble cottage so delightful an abode, and fill old age and infirmity with joy and hope !

CHAPTER VII.

THUS seven years had passed away, when one evening in autumn, I had done my daily work, and was sitting with my mother, who was spinning, and William, who was making a basket, a kind of work he had grown very fond of on becoming incapable of more active employment: the day had been fine, but, as is common in autumn, a violent shower of rain, attended with a great chillness, had suddenly come on.

My mother complained of the cold, when I fetched a fresh faggot and placed it on the fire, putting the tea-kettle also on the fire, and sweeping the hearth. "Come, Lucy," said my mother as she felt the warmth of the newly-kindled faggot, "sing us a psalm, and let us bless God for all His goodness to us. How many poor creatures want the comforts we enjoy!"

"Mistress," said William, "before you begin I must shut the door, for see how the rain beats in! This is a most violent storm," he added, as he was moving across the room; but just as he had got his hand on the door to shut it, he called

me to look if there was not some poor creature in the field, just across the yard. "Look, mistress," he said, "hard by the old crab-tree, don't you see a man? or do my eyes deceive me? I can't see well at any time, and now the rain beats down so fast, it makes me more blind than usual."

"If there is anybody there," said my mother, "call to him, William, and ask him in."

"He is coming toward the house," said William, "when he is a little nearer I will speak to him."

By the time that I was come to the door, the stranger was got over the stile into the yard. I saw immediately that he wore a soldier's coat, much tattered, with a very shabby military hat, and that he carried an infant, seemingly about a year and a half old, in his arms, while another poor little creature followed him; he was helping this last to get over the stile, and had his back turned towards me.

I had no idea who this poor wanderer and his little babes could be; but the tears instantly stood in my eyes, to observe their ragged condition, and how they were drenched with rain.

The poor infants had neither shoes nor stockings; the eldest wore an old straw hat,

through which her fair hair was seen at the top of her head, and the youngest had laid its little head upon its father's breast.

William called to the man to make haste, and take shelter from the rain; but having helped his child over the stile, he turned slowly round, and seemed to doubt whether he should come forwards.

There was something in his face which startled me, but still I did not know him. He came on slowly. William threw the door wide open, and stepped back, inviting him to come in, but the man stood motionless for more than a minute without the door, fixing his eyes on me with a look as I never, never can forget. It was his dark eyes which alone told me that it was James who stood before me; for oh! how changed—how very greatly changed was he since I had last seen him! He was become so thin that his features seemed quite altered; he was deadly pale, his beard was long, his hair neglected, and misery and poverty were to be seen through all his dress. One little girl held the skirt of his ragged coat, and the other lay in his arms, half-overcome with sleep, and half with hunger and cold; they were small, fair, and lovely children,

but seemed to have endured much hardship. He looked at me, and then upon his children, but did not speak one word.

I gazed at him for some moments, hardly believing that it was indeed our long-lost James whom I saw before me in so sad a condition. "Oh James, James!" at length I said, as I fell back upon a chair that stood near me; for I was quite overcome, and not another word could I speak.

For some moments I hardly knew what passed; but I afterwards recollected that, when he heard my voice, he turned away, perhaps thinking that we should refuse to receive him and his helpless babes, and his head sunk down against the cheek of the infant which lay in his arms.

But William and my mother, now understanding who the stranger was, called to him to hasten out of the storm. William took the hand of his beloved master, and drew him in; while my mother placed the arm-chair for him near the fire. As poor James came in, I remembered the moment when he had last left the cottage in all the pride of youth and health, with a high unbroken spirit, and thinking that he was born to make a

great and gay figure in the world ; and now I saw him return, weak and worn down with some sad disease, which seemed to prey upon his vitals, his beauty had passed away, his high and proud spirit was broken, and he was come to ask shelter in the humblest manner for himself and two poor infants, O Lord ! “ when Thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth ; surely every man is vanity ” (Psalm xxxix. 11).

My heart was touched with many sad remembrances, and the tears ran fast down my cheeks. James was glad to sit down on the chair which my mother had placed for him ; and when she had welcomed her long-lost child (for so she kindly called him)—welcomed him with tears, and with many other proofs of the tenderest love—the poor fellow was quite overcome : he sobbed aloud, and his face sunk upon her venerable bosom, as he put her aged arms round his neck.

It was such a sight as I never can forget ; yet I have not power to bring it before you by any words which I can use. Old William stood by his master, his eyes were full of tears ; he tried to speak, and could not ; he seemed ashamed

to be so overcome, and turning hastily away, left the room.

At length I got up, and came near to him, and taking James's hand, as his arm was under the waist of the little child which sat upon his knee, I said to him, "My dear long-lost brother, you are welcome, and your pretty babes; but where is your wife? she should be as welcome as you are."

"Yes," said my mother, "she should indeed; why did you not bring her?"

He shook his head, but made no answer to this question.

My mother looked at the little children, and kissed them; I did the same: while the poor father, seeing how his children were received, lifted up his eyes, now full of tears, towards heaven; and then, suddenly falling on one knee, still holding his infant on the other, "Oh, my God, my God, my heavenly Father," he cried, "I have sinned against Heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son" (Luke xv. 21). Then speaking to my mother and to me, "Oh, my beloved aunt, my more than aunt, my tender mother, and you my ever, ever dear sister, I have hitherto lived only to repay your kind-

ness with ingratitude, your love with cruelty, and your gentleness with contempt : yet now, in the hour of affliction, I return to you, as my only comforters, under God, and my only friends ; I bring you my helpless children, and implore, humbly implore your pity for them. Oh, my God, what a wretch, what a guilty wretch have I been !”

“No more, no more of this, my dear James,” said my mother ; “I cannot bear it, it hurts me too much. If you have offended against heaven, as we all have done, ‘return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon you, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow’ (Isaiah lv. 7 ; i. 18). Repent, my son, and you shall be at peace ; believe in the Lord Jesus, and He will cover you with the robe of His righteousness. But do not again speak of having offended *us* : our love for you has known no abatement ; we have grieved for you, we have prayed for you, and you are welcome to me, as a lost child to a tender mother.” So saying she gave him her hand, entreating him to rise ; while she turned from him to wipe away the tears which ran fast down her cheeks.

At this moment William came in with a suit

of his Sunday clothes, and some clean linen, which he placed very carefully at the fire, to air for his master : reminding us at the same time, that the poor wanderers wanted other comforts than kind words.

“My dear Lucy,” said my mother, “we do indeed forget ourselves : there is by my bedside a little box ; it has not been opened for a long time. You will find in it some little clothes that belonged to you, and some that James’s mother gave me ; try if you cannot suit these poor babes out of them : the key is on the old bunch.”

I hastened to obey my mother, and soon returned with a little dress for each of these poor ragged infants. When I took the youngest from its father’s arms, while he went into William’s room to change his clothes, she struggled and held out her little arms towards him ; but the eldest seemed willing to continue with us, being pleased with her new dress.

While I washed the mud and dirt from them, my mother with great care aired their clothes ; and after they were made clean and neatly dressed, we kissed them, and my mother called them her grandchildren. They were indeed sweet infants, and very pretty, although very

pale and thin, and wanting that good nourishment which with God's blessing, we were afterwards able to afford them.

When James returned, William made him take his arm-chair in the chimney corner, opposite my mother. The little infant sprang towards her father as soon as she saw him, and he received her in his arms, while the eldest took her place on a low foot-stool at his feet. Old William had placed his chair by his beloved master, and I was busied in making the tea, and preparing some warm milk for the children, which I soon brought them. James fed his little baby and the eldest was able to help herself. They ate like children who had long wanted a good meal: and the youngest was no sooner satisfied, than she gently sunk back in her father's arms in a sweet sleep; her little cheeks, lately so pale, beginning to glow with a lively and soft colour, like that of a rose.

"Heaven bless that sweet infant," said my mother; "these babies shall never want a home while I have one to give them, and I will answer, too, for Lucy's never forsaking them: therefore, dear James, set your mind at ease on their account; Lucy will be the kindest of mothers to

them, and she can do more for them than it lies in my power to do."

The poor father, who seemed to be much weakened by disease and fatigue, was quite overcome by my mother's kind words. The tears rushed into his eyes, and he turned aside to hide them; which my mother seeing, began to speak on other subjects. She told him how kind God had been to us, in increasing our little store, and how rich we were become in the good things of this world.

It was not difficult to see that this news gave James pleasure, for it relieved him from the fear that his poor infants might be too heavy a burden upon us. She also told him, that after parting with his farm, and selling his stock, she had placed the sum of money it produced at interest, in the hands of a worthy and rich neighbour; "and now," she added, "I hope that it will be a comfort to you."

"Thank God," replied James, "for all His mercies. I was but a few hours ago a poor miserable wanderer, with two helpless, hungry, and naked children; and now I have found a home, the most tender friends, and every comfort for myself and my poor infants. Oh, my God!

my God! how have I deserved such kindness from Thee?"

"Who," said my mother, "*has* deserved the mercies they have received from God?"

"I know," replied James, "that we are all sinners in the sight of Heaven; but I am a sinner above others, for I have not offended through ignorance; I never have done wrong without acting against my awakened conscience: and yet the Almighty Lord God, instead of punishing me as I deserve, blesses me beyond every hope; He has brought me to a place of rest, and has provided parents for those poor babies, who will soon lose their father as they already have lost their mother, for she never more can be a mother to them."

We wished to ask what was become of his wife, for it seemed that she still lived, but fearing to distress him, we deferred the question. "Which of the two debtors," asked my mother, "loved their creditor most, when he frankly forgave them both; the one who owed five hundred pence, or the other who owed fifty? Our Saviour says that Simon judged rightly when he answered, 'He to whom most is forgiven:' and know, my dear James, that we are all justified freely by the merits of our Redeemer, and none

of us by our good works or deservings. Go, my son, with all your sins, and cast them at the foot of the cross of Christ."

Here we broke off this discourse. I gave James some tea, and some white bread and butter; of which he ate heartily, having had but little that day: and we tried to amuse him by telling him how his old neighbours had fared during his absence, and by such other innocent talk as we could think of. But, although he strove to be cheerful, from time to time he sighed and looked very sad, appearing to be much overcome by every proof of kindness which was shown him: he also seemed to be much tired, for, as he said, he had carried his children a long way that day. So, at an early hour, William prepared his master's bed not far from his own; and having warmed some beer with spice, and toasted a slice of bread for his supper, he attended his dear master to his room.

By his own desire, William carried the children to their father, and laying the little one in his bosom, placed the other beside him; for James was not willing to be parted from them.

We did not omit our family prayers that night; but on the contrary we prayed more

earnestly to God for a blessing upon the events of the day, thanking Him more fervently for all His mercies, and particularly recommending the stray sheep, which we had found again, to the care of the Good Shepherd.

James had never been present at family prayers since his last separation from us ; but he did not seem now so inattentive to that exercise as he had been then ; on the contrary, he was so much affected by it, that we were obliged to break off abruptly, hoping that he would in a few days recover his health and strength, and with them more composure of mind. "How wonderful !" said my mother, after James had retired, "how unsearchable are the ways of Providence ! Now we know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness didst inflict us " (Psalm cxix. 75).

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next morning William brought me the two children as soon as I returned from milking, and I dressed them and fed them. The little one began to know me, and being satisfied with bread and milk, it struggled to get from my arms, and holding my hand it ran across the room—its sister following it—to the door which led into the garden, where they seated themselves together, and played with some flowers which I had gathered for them. William took his seat near them, working at the basket, and looking at them from time to time, saying, "Mistress, I may make myself of some use now, in watching and taking care of these innocent creatures while you are busy."

When my mother came down, I found that the children would not want careful friends, for she often got up from her chair, and with her knitting in her hand, went to see that all was well with them.

When our breakfast was ready, James came

in, and sat down in the very place where he used to sit in his early days. He looked very pale, and when my mother asked him after his health, he answered, "I am better than I deserve to be." And as he sat, he leaned his head against the back of his chair; his thoughts, as he afterwards told us, having been in the night very troublesome to him, all his past faults rising in remembrance before him, and exciting his self-abhorrence to an almost intolerable degree.

My mother saw his grief, and was touched with it; but wiping away her tears, she poured out some tea, and holding it to him, "Dear James," she said, "my dear son, be comforted;" and she pressed him to take his breakfast. He made no answer, but endeavoured as much as possible to conceal his distress.

"Dear son," said my mother, "be comforted, see, Lucy is in tears for you; you grieve your sister Lucy."

He turned to me to see if I really was weeping: ah, I shall never forget it! "Beloved Lucy," he said, "Do not shed tears for me,

'For violets plucked, the sweetest showers
Can ne'er make grow again.'

I then remembered what I had long ago for-

gotten, the occasion on which I had spoken those words to him; and the remembrance cut me to the heart. I was forced to leave the room, and to spend some time in prayer. I found all the feelings of sorrow, of worldly sorrow for lost happiness—those feelings which I had supposed for some years past to be quite subdued—returning again, and taking full possession of me: these feelings were now become very sinful. I confessed them to my God—and after anxiously imploring the divine assistance, His grace became sufficient for me, and His strength was perfected in my weakness.

When I returned into the room, I heard my pious parent thus pleading with James: “You say, my son, that all your hopes of happiness in this world are cut off. I thank God that you have found this earth is not your resting-place; I thank God that so early in life you have been made to know yourself, to feel that you are altogether sinful, and can have no hope from your own good works. Your heavenly Father has chastised you in mercy: ‘We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live? For

they chastened us after their own pleasure ; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness' (Hebrews xii. 9-10). Blessed are those afflictions which bring the sinner to Christ, for an eternal weight of glory will be the consequence of them."

My mother's pious exhortations were not without effect upon poor James ; for when I sat down to the break-fast table, appearing rather more cheerful, he took one of his little girls into his arms, while the other, leaning upon his knee, with her innocent prattle diverted his attention from many sad remembrances.

After breakfast, poor James gave my mother an account of many things that had happened to him during our separation, and confessed what had first induced him to become a soldier. He owned that the day he enlisted at Worcester fair, he was in company with Sarah Page and Sergeant Browne ; that he drank too much ; and that, when intoxicated, poor Sarah assisted the sergeant in persuading him to enlist—she knew best for what purpose. Sarah, also, on his return from Gloucester, had told him tales of me, which led him to behave towards me so unkindly as he did.

He confessed that, on the evening of his leav-

ing us, he had gone in his grief and anger to Sarah Page, to whom he related all that had passed; and her father being from home, he stayed some hours with her. And having been persuaded by her to drink freely, in that condition he made her an offer of marriage; in consequence of which she followed him to his regiment at Gloucester, where he married her, and soon afterward they were embarked on board ship for foreign service.

This marriage proved, as might have been expected, a very unhappy one. Poor Sarah's love for her husband soon failed; they met with many trials in the hot, unhealthy country in which they were stationed, and mutual reproaches followed. James endeavoured to drown care by drinking, which after a time brought on the disease that now hung upon him, and seemed likely to prove fatal; while Sarah sought comfort in dressing and gay company.

They had three children, the eldest of whom had a very long and painful illness: poor James never spoke of this little boy without being much affected, sometimes even to tears. "He was a lovely boy," he said, "but his mother was not kind to him. Many were the days, and many

were the nights that I watched by the bed of my poor boy, or carried him in my arms, endeavouring in every way I could think of to give him ease. The afflictions of this my sweet infant were the first strokes that truly touched my heart, subdued my unbroken spirit, and made me feel my dependence on God."

James then informed my mother, that after the birth of his youngest child, and not till then, his wife had taken to drink; and soon after, breaking through all the duties of a wife, and all the feelings of a mother, she left her family, and followed a sergeant belonging to another regiment. He seemed to feel much sorrow for the wickedness of his wife; yet added, that he never wished to see her again, although he bore her no ill-will, but, on the contrary, had often prayed that she might not die in her sins.

His little girl, he said, was so young when her mother left her, that she would certainly have died, had not one of his fellow-soldier's wives, whose little one was just dead, taken it to nurse, and treated it very tenderly. Thus the Almighty provided a mother for the poor baby, when its own mother had forgotten it.

"Poor unhappy Sally!" proceeded James,

with a deep sigh ; " had I been a gentler and more sober husband, I might, perhaps, have made her a better wife ; but all I can now do for her is to pray that she may become sensible of her sins, and seek for pardon."

Here he stopped for a moment, and then went on ; but my mother said he blushed as he continued to confess to her, that the habit of drinking to drown uneasy thoughts, had so grown upon him, that after being often found drunk, he was at length degraded from the rank of sergeant, and an end put to all his hopes of promotion ; his health, too, had so much declined, that he soon became unfit for service, and was sent home, with some other sick men, a few months after his wife had left him.

God, he said, had given him a prosperous voyage ; and when he landed at Portsmouth with his poor infants, a small sum of money was given him to take him to his parish, with the promise of a pension.

" My own weakness and the helplessness of my children," added he, " made the journey long and fatiguing to me, and I was much oftener obliged to stop for rest than a man in health would have been ; so that when I reached

Worcester, my money was spent, and I was forced to beg for a bit of bread. A man returning from market, with an almost empty cart, took pity on me yesterday, and brought me and my children to the top of the hill, from which we first see this village; and from thence I walked, sometimes carrying only one, and sometimes both my children. I had four miles to come, so that when the storm of rain came on, I was quite spent, and forced to sit down for some time under the thatch of an old barn which stands in the meadow below; but the children beginning to shiver with the cold and wet, I resolved to come on, although my strength was almost gone.

“When I saw the smoke of this dear cottage, a thousand painful remembrances and regrets rushed at once into my mind. I felt what no words can tell; at one moment the sweetest hope; at the next, the greatest fear, lest some or all of my beloved friends should be no more, or lest they should refuse to receive me, for I felt that I was not worthy to be admitted under their roof.

“But when I saw all my dear friends, and beheld again every well-known object, I was quite overcome; all my sins came into my mind, and

had it not been for the sake of my children, I felt that I had almost rather perish in the cold than come into your presence. How little did I expect such a reception as I have found! Oh; had you treated me as I deserved, you had for ever shut your door against me."

"Had we dealt so by you, my son," said my kind mother (as old William afterwards told me), "we might have expected a like refusal from God on our crying to Him for mercy." She then went on to give him much wise and holy counsel; not palliating his offences, but encouraging him with the consolatory assurance, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. She exhorted him, moreover, with humility and faith, to make an immediate application of that blood to his wounded mind, that his conscience being purged from dead works, he might be prepared to serve his God in newness of life, should his days be prolonged; or if it should please God to determine otherwise, that he might be enabled to say, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

She advised him to talk to our rector, a pious and aged man, who had known him when a little

boy, and who, she said, was much better able to instruct him rightly in these important matters than herself.

While she was still speaking on these things, I came in, and saw her take James's hand as he sat sorrowfully with his eyes bent downwards ; and I heard her say, " God Almighty bless my son, and give him that godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of " (2 Cor. vii. 10).

I was going away, thinking that I disturbed their discourse ; but James, turning to me, said, " Dear Lucy, I have been confessing my many offences to my beloved aunt, and I already find myself comforted by her pious counsels. I do not wish to hide my faults from you, but I cannot relate them to you myself : when you hear how I have acted, for how many years I have forgotten my God, and all the Holy lessons I learned in my younger days, you will, I know, be much grieved ; but I hope that you will forgive and pity me."

After this conversation, James seemed more easy in his mind ; he played a little with his children, rocked the youngest in his arms till it fell asleep, as it frequently did in the middle of

the day, then laid it on his own bed, and, taking my mother's Bible, watched beside it.

At dinner he was cheerful, and said that the happiest hour he had spent for many years was the one he had just passed while sitting by his little sleeping child. "It's little warm hand," said he, "was laid upon mine, and it slept most sweetly: from time to time I heard the voice of my other dear little girl, as she was playing in the garden, talking to my kind aunt; I heard the brook falling down the rock at the bottom of the garden, and the wind gently rustling among the leaves. This quiet interval," said he, "seemed to do me more good than any medicine could have done: but what comforted me far more, even than this sweet rest, was the book which I was reading. I opened it just where our Saviour relates the parable of the prodigal son, and that parable seemed as if it had been spoken for my comfort only; it applied so strongly and so sweetly to my case, as to make me hope that God would grant me true repentance. But oh!" he added, "my sins are of the deepest dye; because I have offended against conviction, and have resisted the Holy Spirit."

My mother had sent early that morning to

the village, for a very worthy man, a doctor, who had attended her, whenever she had been sick, for many years.

After we had dined, he came in, and my mother made James consult him: he was a very friendly man, one who feared God, and thought more of doing his duty than of any gain he might receive thereby.

He gave my mother but little hope of James's recovery; yet said that his complaint being of a lingering kind, he might live some months longer. He thought, however, that he could give him some medicines, which, with God's blessing, might make the remainder of his days more easy to him; advising that he should hasten so to settle his affairs with God and man, that his mind might be quite at rest.

Being questioned by James, he repeated the same things to him; which the poor sick man hearkened to, with becoming resignation to the will of God, and without any appearance of surprise.

"My worldly concerns," he answered, "are soon settled: these dear friends will take care of my poor children; and the little money that will remain, when my funeral expenses are paid, will

help to procure food and clothes for them. As to my heavenly concerns, I can do nothing—I feel myself quite helpless—I can only cry to my dear Saviour, and take hold of His promises, confessing myself a lost, undone creature.”

“ Well,” said the good doctor—for he was a pious man—“and what more can any of us do, my friend? Who has any merit to plead? Nay, in our natural state, we cannot even cry for help. It is through the Holy Spirit of God that the poor sinner cries out, ‘ Lord, help me ! ’ ”

He then told James that it would not hurt him to go to church before the winter set in, and offered to lend him a quiet old horse, on which he might take the air every day. Then taking his leave, he promised often to call upon him, saying that his business frequently led him that way.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM that time our dear James, as the doctor had foretold, became weaker and weaker ; his complaint gained upon him, although slowly, and he became daily more thin and pale.

He was able, however, to go twice or three times to church and to call several times upon the rector, from whose discourse he received much comfort. He was very attentive at our morning and evening prayers ; and, as William told us, often prayed in the course of the day in his own room, sometimes, when his children were asleep, kneeling by the bedside and praying over them. He seemed to love his Bible daily more and more, and, when from weakness he was not able to read long at a time, he took pleasure in laying that holy book by him. I often observed that he took a particular delight in the Gospel of St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord.

He loved to hear our morning and evening psalms and hymns ; but, as his strength wasted away, he was so much touched by them, simple

and humble as our singing was, that it suited him best to hearken to them at some little distance. He loved to walk in the garden or the next field, when the sun was shining, sometimes with old William or my mother, and sometimes with his little children, for whom he showed the tenderest love to the very last, and would play with them as if he had himself been a little child.

Indeed, as my mother remarked, he became daily more and more like a little child, more mild, more teachable and humble, and trusting more and more in his Saviour, even as an infant relies on its parent; in short, he became like one of those little ones of whom our blessed Saviour says, "of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke xviii. 16). Yet I must not omit to say, lest I should mislead others, that he did not attain to this state without passing through deep waters, and enduring such convictions of sin, as, though no doubt necessary, were extremely terrible both to himself and to all round him. When I witnessed the dreadful sufferings of this poor man, I conceived a horror of sin, of which I had before no idea, and in comparison of which I felt that neither sickness, nor pain, nor death itself deserved the name of evil.

About six weeks after his return to us, the holy sacrament was administered at our parish church; dear James, old William, and I were present, but my mother was too infirm to walk so far.

James received it with such seriousness and piety as I have seldom witnessed, and was so exhausted by his attention to this sacred duty, that he was forced to lie down upon his bed on returning home.

He was not able to dine with us; but, after some hours' rest, he came to us as we sat by the fire in the evening, and looking cheerfully and kindly around him, "I thank God," he said, "for the sweet peace of mind which I have felt this day. I believe and trust that God hath now reconciled me to Himself, by Jesus Christ. I can look forward to death with hope. Oh, that the lovers of this world, and the lovers of what this world calls pleasure, could only for a moment enjoy that sweet hope with which God has blessed me, a poor sick and dying man! Surely they would forsake their empty gratifications, their carnal joys which end in death, and seek after that peace of mind which passeth all understanding."

He then kissed his little children, and blessed

them. After which he held out his pale hand to me, and said, "Dear Lucy, I know that you have long ago forgiven me all the pain I have caused you; and I can now look forward with the hope of spending a happy eternity with you, where we shall no longer think of those light afflictions which have endured but for a moment. Then shall we, my dear Lucy, with all our beloved friends with whom we have dwelt in this vale of tears, meet in the presence of God, and enjoy those pleasures which flow at His right hand for evermore. Let His name be ever praised, through whom we are allowed to entertain these sweet hopes!

"One other favour I have now to ask of God, which is, that He will take pity on poor Sally, and make her sensible of the wicked life she has led. From my heart I forgive her. Oh, my God, my God, have pity on her; and may the redemption that is in Jesus be effectually extended to her!"

He then broke out afresh into expressions of gratitude and love to his Redeemer; thanking my mother and William for all their kindnesses to him; blessing God for providing such friends for his orphan children; and praying the Good

Shepherd to bring back every straying sheep to His blessed fold, as he himself had been brought back.

We were much affected by seeing him thus filled with pious hope and holy charity; and we fervently blessed God together on his account. After this, our evening passed away in sweet and pious discourse; and poor dying James, my mother, and old William, notwithstanding their infirm and humble state, enjoyed more peace that evening, sitting by our little wood fire, than they who make this world their god can ever experience, even in the midst of their highest enjoyments.

After that day, James never was able to go so far as the church. As winter came on, his sickness increased; but, thank God, towards the last he seemed to suffer very little pain. We made a little couch for him by the fireside, where he would lie, and look at his children at play, and smile if any one spoke to him; but he became so weak, that he did not care to talk, and was unable to read; yet sometimes we heard him repeating, in a low voice, some favourite text, or part of a psalm or hymn, which he had learnt in his childhood.

He died the Sunday before Christmas day, during morning service. I did not go to church that day, for I did not think it fit to leave him, ill as he was. An old widow was come to dine with us, and to be present at our family prayers, she being unable to walk so far as the church, on account of a fall of snow.

James, hearing that we were going to prayer, begged to be present. He was accordingly brought to his couch with some difficulty, and laid upon it. While we were at prayer, he fell asleep, and continued asleep till after we had finished. I was standing by him when he awoke. He said, "I have had a very sweet dream, and am better; I am ready now to hear you pray." He then, seeming to forget what he had just said, called for his little children, kissed them, and said, "My babies, learn to fear and love God, for He is a tender Father to His children." These were the last words I heard him speak; he afterwards fell into a disturbed sleep, and when he awoke, we all perceived that he was dying.

His soul departed, and returned to God, before the hour of morning service was over. His death was easy, and God had been infinitely good in not cutting him off in the midst of his

sins, before his heart was renewed by grace, and before he had taken hold of that great salvation which is in Christ Jesus. His last days were calm, easy, and full of comfort, and his death, I believe, was the death of the righteous.

On Christmas day he was buried. I followed him to his grave, and so did old William; we also carried his little infants to his funeral. Many persons shed tears who had remembered my dear James in his early days, all gay, healthy, and handsome, and who now saw his little helpless infants unconsciously attending their father's funeral. He was buried by his father and mother and uncle, on the south side of the church; and every summer, since that time, I have taken his dear children to visit his grave, and to strew flowers over it.

We did not sorrow for James as those who sorrow without hope; and as time wore away our grief, we thought of him only with pleasure, thanking God for that sincere repentance and those blessed views of a Saviour, with which he was favoured before his death. And often did we thankfully observe how wonderfully, by the wise providence of God, every thing had been made to work together for our good.

Before James died, he made his will, in which he left the small sum of money he possessed to his little girls, to be spent for them as they might want it. But that money still remains untouched, as a little fund for any future time of need ; my income having been sufficient, through the bounty of God, both for my own and their maintenance.

Their father also requested in his will, that his daughters might never be trusted to the care of their mother, or any of her relations, but left with my mother and myself. However, this caution was not necessary, for we soon afterwards heard of the death of poor Sally by a fever ; and the Miller Page marrying again, and having a young family, took little notice of his granddaughters.

Thus these dear children were left wholly with us, and we endeavoured to bring them up in the fear of God, and as useful and industrious women. The life of my dear mother was prolonged till more than ten years after the death of James, and poor old William survived her about a year.

The two children became very dear to my mother, and could wait upon her and read to her for several years before her death : she seemed

to consider them as her grand-children, and had great pleasure in leading them to the knowledge of Christ. I taught them also to wait upon the faithful old William, and to respect him as a father.

Heaven heard our prayers in behalf of these children; and there is a work, I trust, begun in them, which the Almighty will surely accomplish to His own glory.

How happy have the last eighteen years of my life been spent! Oh, how greatly, even in this life, have all my early sorrows been repaid! while through the mercy of God I have still greater things in view.

My dear mother, who was, I trust, a humble Christian, died without a pang; her soul was required of her while she slept—a death most desirable to the children of God, but dreadful indeed to those who are still strangers to the covenant of peace.

William's death was also very easy. Since I lost this good old man, these dear young people have been my only companions, and in that I have found extraordinary comfort: they have been even as daughters to me; sweet companions in health, and the kindest nurses to me in sickness.

I commit them, without one anxious thought, to the care of the same gracious God who has hitherto preserved them. Their prospects, even in this world, are very comfortable. What little I have, I shall leave to them. The eldest is promised in marriage to a pious, sober young man, the son of a neighbour; when I am no more, he will take this cottage, and I hope, before my death, to see him the husband of my child; though she is unwilling to consent to this, lest she should be called off from her attention to me. Thus having arranged all my worldly concerns, I desire to lay aside all other business, but that of preparing for the long journey which I soon must take.

Here Lucy Clare finished her story, praising and blessing God for his many mercies shown towards her, and the many happy years which she had enjoyed: pointing out, in a manner which made a deep and lasting impressiou on my mind—for I was then but a young inexperienced man—how wonderfully the wisdom of God's providence had been exhibited in her life, fully verifying the terms of that cheering declaration, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind

is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee " (Isaiah xxvi. 3).

And she added, that there was no life, however obscure, in which the same wonderful providence might not be seen by those who are attentive to the divine leadings: "and therefore," continued she, "let all Christians praise the Lord, call upon His name, and declare His doings among the people" (Isaiah xii. 4).

The day that Lucy Clare concluded her history, I administered the sacrament to her, Upon which occasion, she called in her two daughters (for so she considered them), before whom she had never thought it proper to relate the history of their parents. She had, indeed, as she told us, pointed out to them some of their errors by way of caution, and that they might profit by their parent's sad experience; but she had done this with great tenderness and caution, and always in private.

When these young women were come, I administered the sacrament, and was wonderfully edified by the piety of the sick woman and her children; for, oh, how lovely is true piety, whether it appears in sickness or in healthy and blooming youth!

After that time we often visited Lucy Clare, whose death came on with slow but certain steps. I visited her only a few hours before her soul was required of her, and I never saw any one in a more happy frame of mind.

The approach of death seemed to be a subject of joy and triumph to her; but it was a pleasure to me to see that her confidence was not placed upon her own imperfect works, but that she gloried in the cross of Christ (Gal. vi. 14).

It might in some sort be said of her, that she never tasted of death, surely not of its bitterness, for her soul passed away without a struggle and without a groan.

Her children followed her to her grave, weeping on their own accounts, but rejoicing on hers. She was buried by her father and mother, and near the place where the remains of James Clare had been laid. Her grave is pointed out by a small stone, which her adopted children caused to be placed there, on which is graven this text from St. Luke i. 45: "Blessed is she that believes, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her."

These pious daughters, at the same time, failed not to raise a little humble stone to their

father's memory, on which were these words from the prophet Isaiah—words which their father was often heard to repeat in his last illness: "O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me" (Isaiah xii. 1).

They were both married; the eldest, before the death of Lucy Clare, to the young man to whom she had been engaged some time; and the youngest, soon afterwards, to a carpenter in the village. These young men lived in the fear of God, no less than their wives; and they have brought up large families in the same holy fear: they have been frugal, sober, and industrious; and, with God's blessing, although they have lived humbly, have never known want.

I often call to see them, as my custom is, from time to time, to visit all my flock; and hear them with pleasure, after so many years are passed away, still speak of Lucy Clare as, under heaven, one of their best and dearest friends, remarking that the memory of the just is blessed (Proverbs x. 7).

When my worthy old friend had finished this little tale, he turned to my sons and daughters, and said, "My children, there is a

lesson to be learned from the history of this pious woman, which is more valuable, if well observed, than all the boasted learning of men.

“This lesson is, that we ought to place our entire trust in God, as a little child trusts in its mother, looking with pious care for all the signs and tokens which He gives of His divine will, knowing that He will never fail to point out the path of right, even in the most difficult affairs of human life, to such as sincerely wish to follow it.”

He then went on to describe that lovely, teachable, humble, and child-like spirit, so precious in the sight of God; that spirit which the world despises and holds in abomination, but by which alone men can attain the kingdom of heaven, for without it no man can rightly believe, and without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6).

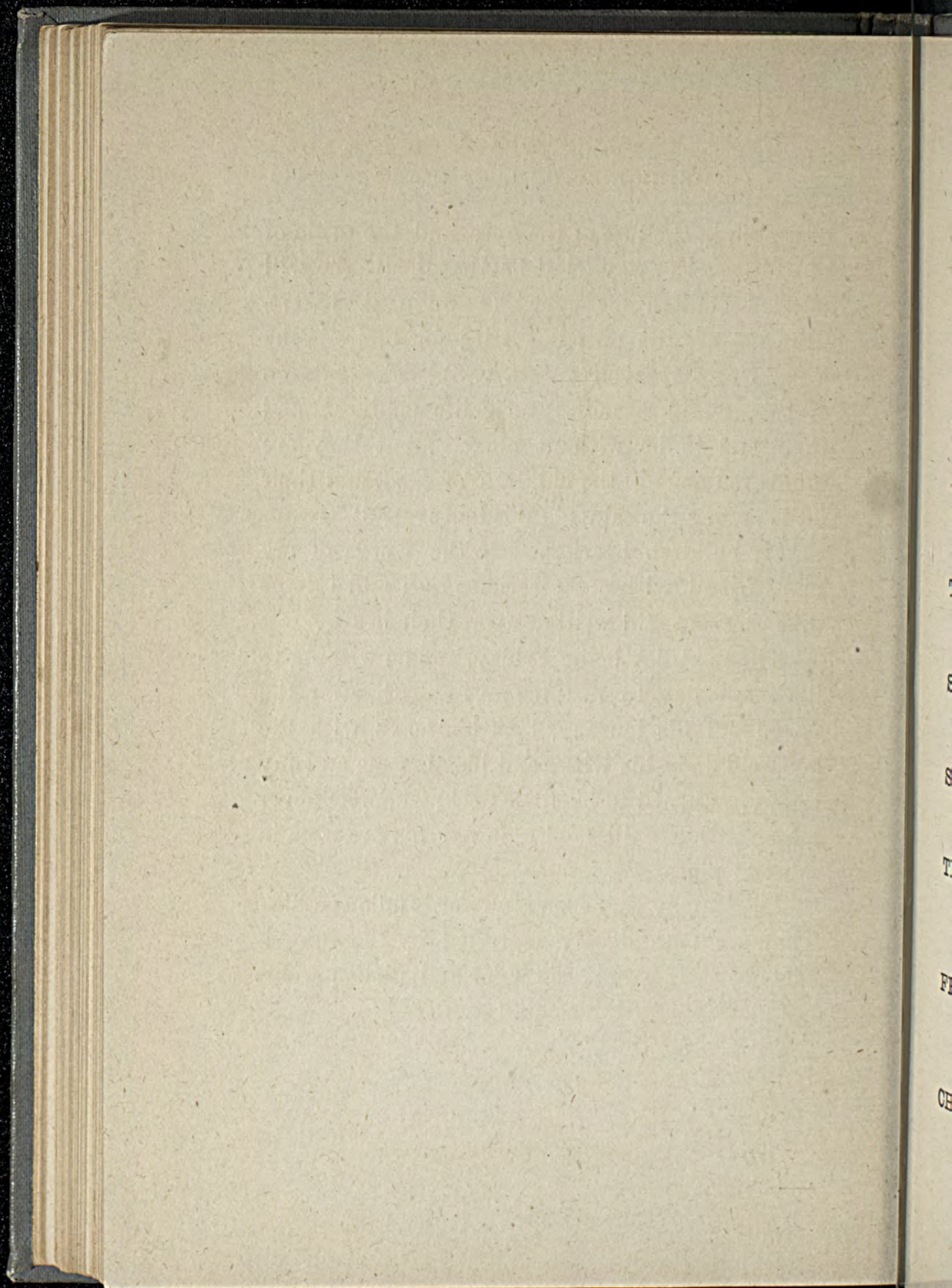
He then spoke of the contrary spirit, the spirit of this world—the spirit of pride, of self-justification, of presumption; a spirit approved by the world and honoured of men, but whose end is shame, and grief, and bitter repentance. “But my beloved children,” said this good old man, “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: for all that is in the world, the lust

of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, passeth away : but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever ' (1 John ii. 15-17). ' Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven ' (Matt. v. 3). The children of this world account ' their life madness, and their end to be without honour : but they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints ' (Wisdom iv. 4-5)."

My children hearkened to the words of my pious friend with great seriousness ; and I hope that they are still written upon their hearts.

The next day being Friday, and he wishing to have one day to rest, before Sabbath, after the fatigue of his journey, took his leave, with the good old lady his wife ; and blessing me and my family, returned to his little flock, whom he never afterwards left till God required his presence in a better place.

His worthy wife soon afterwards followed him. They are both deeply regretted by the inhabitants of their parish, as tender and pious parents are lamented by their children.



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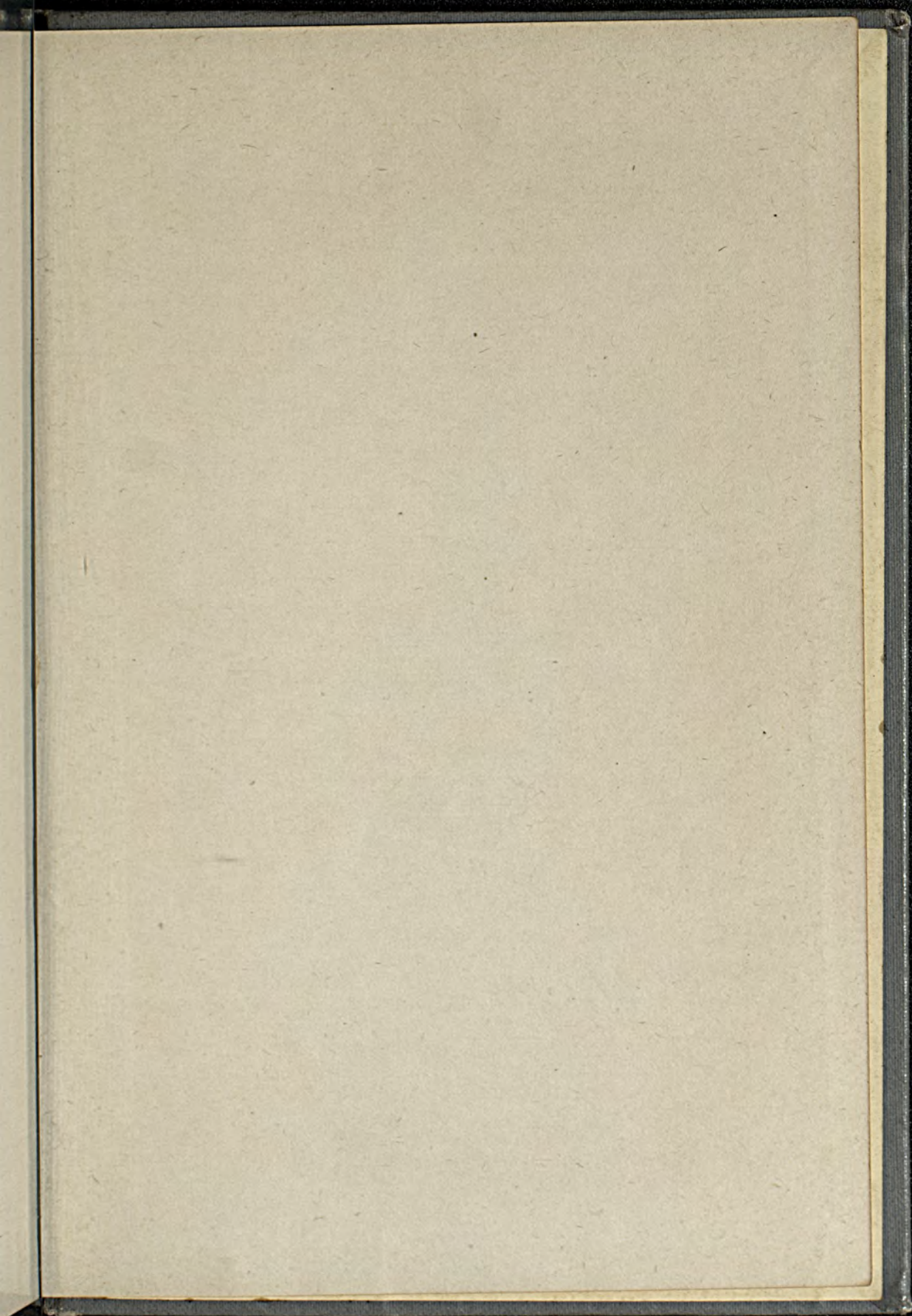
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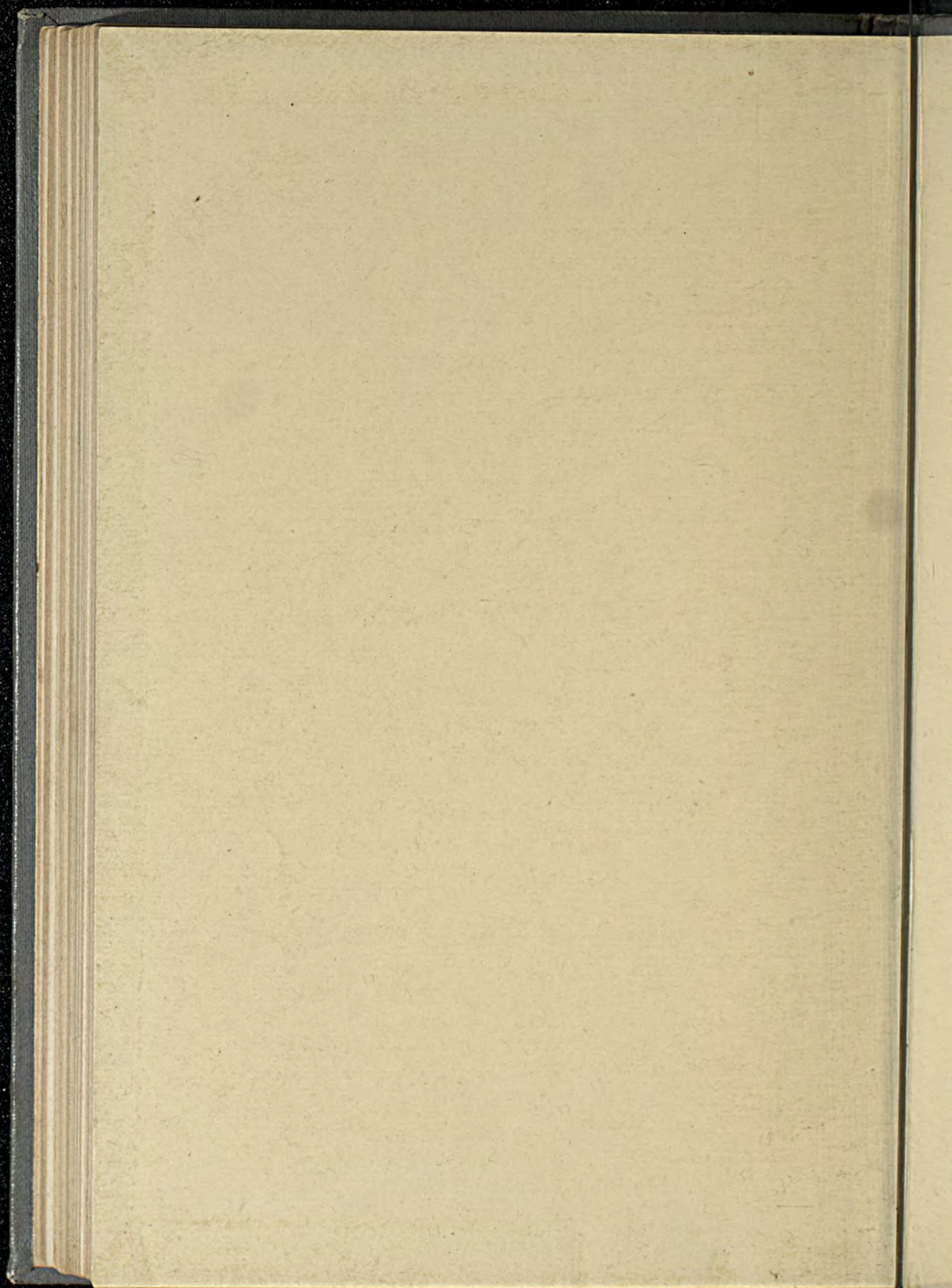
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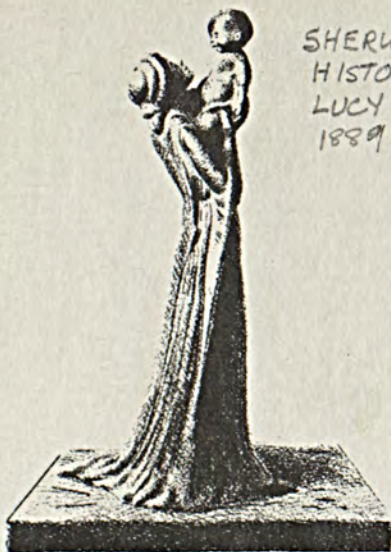
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