

halo; the gay shops gleamed like jewel-caverns of Aladdin hollowed out of the darkness; and the people that hurried or sauntered along looked inscrutable. Where could they live? Had they anybody to love them? Were their hearts quiet under their dingy cloaks and shabby coats?"

"Yes," returned my father, to whom I had said something to this effect; "what would not one give for a peep into the mysteries of all these worlds that go crowding past us! If we could but see through the opaque husk of them, some would glitter and glow like diamond mines; others perhaps would look mere earthy holes; some of them forsaken quarries, with a great pool of stagnant water in the bottom; some like vast coal pits of gloom, into which you dared not carry a lighted lamp for fear of explosion. Some would be mere lumber-rooms; others ill-arranged libraries, without a poet's corner anywhere. But what a wealth of creation they show, and what infinite room for hope it affords!"

"But don't you think, papa, there may be something of worth lying even in the earth pit, or at the bottom of the stagnant water in the forsaken quarry?"

"Indeed I do; though I *have* met more than one in my lifetime concerning whom I felt compelled to say that it wanted keener eyes than mine to discover the hidden jewel. But then there *are* keener eyes than mine, for there are more loving eyes. Myself I have been able to see good very clearly where some could see none; and shall I doubt that God can see good where my mole-eyes can see none? Be sure of this, that as He is keen-eyed for the evil in His creatures to destroy it, He would, if it were possible, be yet keener-eyed for the good to nourish and cherish it. If men would only side with the good that is in them—will that the seed should grow and bring forth fruit!"

CHAPTER XIX.—MISS CLARE'S HOME.

WE had now arrived at the passage. The gin-shop was flaring through the fog. A man in a fustian jacket came out of it and walked slowly down before us, with the clay of the brick-field clinging to him as high as the leather straps with which his trousers were confined, garterwise, under the knee. The place was quiet. We and the brickmaker seemed the only people in it. When we turned the last corner, he was walking in at the very door where Miss Clare had disappeared. When I told my father that was the house, he called after the man, who came out again, and standing on the pavement, waited until we came up.

"Does Miss Clare live in this house?" my father asked.

"She do," answered the man, curtly.

"First floor?"

"No. Nor yet the second, nor the third. She live nearer heaven than ere another in the house 'cep' myself. I live in the attic, and so do she."

"There is a way of living nearer to heaven than that," said my father, laying his hand, "with a right old man's grace," on his shoulder.

"I dunno, 'cep' you was to go up in a balloon," said the man, with a twinkle in his eye, which my father took to mean that he understood him better than he chose to acknowledge; but he did not pursue the figure.

He was a rough, lumpish young man, with good but dull features—only his blue eye was clear. He looked my father full in the face, and I thought I saw a dim smile about his mouth.

"You know her, then, I suppose?"

"Everybody in the house knows *her*. There ain't many the likes o' her as lives wi' the likes of us. You go right up to the top. I don't know if she's in, but a'most any one'll be able to tell you. I 'aint been home yet."

My father thanked him, and we entered the house and began to ascend. The stair was very much worn and rather dirty, and some of the banisters were broken away, but the walls were tolerably clean. Half-way up we met a little girl with tangled hair and tattered garments, carrying a bottle.

"Do you know, my dear," said my father to her, "whether Miss Clare is at home?"

"I dunno," she answered. "I dunno who you mean. I been mindin' the baby. He ain't well. Mother says his head's bad. She's a-going up to tell grannie, and see if she can't do suthin' for him. You better ask mother. Mother!" she called out—"here's a lady an' a gen'lem'."

"You go about yer business, and be back direckly," cried a gruff voice from somewhere above.

"That's mother," said the child, and ran down the stair.

When we reached the second floor, there stood a big, fat woman on the landing, with her face red and her hair looking like that of a doll ill-stuck on. She did not speak, but stood waiting to see what we wanted.

"I'm told Miss Clare lives here," said my father. "Can you tell me, my good woman, whether she's at home?"

"I'm neither good woman nor bad woman," she returned in an insolent tone.

(To be continued.)

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