LIZZIE LEIGH.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS—CHAPTER I.

WHEN Death is present in a household on a Christmas Day, the very contrast between the time as it now is, and the day as it has often been, gives a poignancy to sorrow—a more utter blankness to the desolation. James Leigh died just as the far-away bells of Rochdale Church were ringing for morning service on Christmas Day, 1869. A few minutes before his death, he opened his already glazed eyes, and made a sign to his wife, by the faint motion of his lips, that he had yet something to say. She stood close to him. He whispered, "I forgive her, Amos! May God forgive me."

"Oh, my love, my dear! only get well, and I will never cease praying for you. May God in heaven bless thee in saying them. Thou'rt not so restless, my lad! may be—Oh God!"

For even while she spoke, he died.

They had then about twenty years married life; for nineteen of those years their life had been as calm and happy, as the most perfect uprightness on the one side, and the most complete confidence and loving submission on the other, could make it. Milton's famous line might have been framed and hung up as the rule of their married life, but he was truly the inward, unspoken law. She had stood by him as wife and companion, and no sigh of irritation, no sign of reproach, but even from her grave. She had done everything in his power to make the house-place comfortable for her. She herself, in the old days before her sorrow, had been ready for her husband's return home, than now awaited her. The teaching-rooms were still in order, and the boys had been fed, and the house was tidy and comfortable. She had given no trouble. She had not, in any way, been so much to think and wonder, but she had been so much to think and wonder.

But those last blessed words replaced him on his throne in her heart, and called out all the restlessness of her body. She stood by him, as he stood by her, in the dark, and when his hand was laid upon her, she knew he had been chosen for her, and to him it was revealed the family's disgrace. When the reading was ended, she still hung his hand in her own, and he said, "Mama, I must let the farm—"

"No, I cannot wait, settle it out at once.
"Well, well; I'll speak to Will about it. I see him out yonder. I'll step to him, and tell him about it."

Accordingly he went and joined the two lads, and without more ado, began the subject to them.

"Will, thy mother is fair to go live in Manchester, and come to let the farm. Now, I'm willing to take it for Tom Higgingsbotham; but I like to drive a keen bargain, and there would be no fun meddling with thy mother."

"Let the farm!" said both the lads, at once, "Let the farm!"
with infinite surprise. ‘Go live in Man-
chester!’

When Samuel Orme found that the plan had never before been named to either Will or Tom, he would have nothing to do with it; he said, until they had spoken to their mother; likely she was ‘dazed’ by her husband’s death; he would wait a day or two, and not name it to any one; not to Tom Higginsbotham himself, or may be he would set his heart upon it.
The lads had better go in and talk it over with their mother. He bade them good day, and

Left Will looked very gloomy, but he did not speak till they got near the house. Then he said,—

‘Tom, go to th’ shippon, and supper the cows. I want to speak to mother alone.’

When she was sitting before the fire, looking into her embers, she did not hear him come in; for some time she had lost her quick perception of outward

things.

‘Mother! what’s this about going to Man-
chester?’ I asked her.

‘Oh, lad!’ said she, turning round, and speaking in a beseeching tone, ‘I must go and seek out Lizzie. I cannot rest here thinking

on her. Mary’s this time I’ve left, thy father sleeping in bed, and stole to th’ window, and looked and looked my heart out towards Manchester, till I thought I must just set out and tramp over moor and moor straight away till I got there, and then lift up every donkey

case till I came to our Lizzie. And often, when the south wind was blowing soft among the hollows, I fancied (it could but be fancy, thou knowest) I heard her crying upon me; and as I thought the voice came closer and closer, till at last it was sobbing out ‘Mother!’ close to the door; and I’ve stolen down, and undone the latch before now, and looked out into the still black night, thinking to see her face; and seeing it, I thought I heard she spoke these last words. She shook her head, but made no answer. He asked again,—

‘Will you, mother, agree to this?’

‘I’ll agree to it a-this-n’s,’ said she. ‘If I hear and see nought of her for a twelvemonth, I’ll go looking in Manchester this spring. I’ll just ha’ broken my heart fairly before the year’s ended, and then I shall know neither love nor sorrow for her any more, when I’m at rest in the grave.’ I’ll agree to that, Will.’

‘Well, I suppose it must be so. I shall not tell Tom, mother, why we’re flitting to Man-
chester. Best spare him.’

‘As thou wilt,’ said she, sadly, ‘so that we go, that’s all.’

Before the wild daffodils were in flower in the sheltered copses round Upsole Farm, the Leigs were settled in their Manchester home; if they could ever grow to consider that place as a home, where there was no garden, no view, nothing that interested the eye, only a far-stretching view, over moor and hollow,

—no dumb animals to be tended, and, what more than all they missed, no old haunting memories, even though those remembrances told of sorrow, and the dead and gone.

Mrs. Leigh heeded the loss of all these things less than her sons. She had more spirit in her countenance than she had had for months, because now she had hope of—so sad an enough kind, to be sure, but still it was hope.

She performed all her household duties, strange and complicated as they were, and bewildered as she was, with all the town-accent of her new manner of life, but when her house was ‘sided,’ and the housekeeper came home from their work, in the evening, she could put on her things and steal out, unnoticed, she thought, but not without many a heavy sigh from Will, after which she had closed the house-door and departed. It became more and more past midnight before she came back, pale and weary, with almost a guilty look upon her face; but first face so full of disappointment and hope deferred, that Will had never the heart to say what he thought of the folly and hopelessness of the search.

Night after night it was renewed, till days grew to weeks, weeks to months. All this time Will did his duty towards her as much as he could, without having sympathy with her.

He stood at home in the evenings for Tom’s sake, and often wished he had Tom’s pleasure in reading, for the time hung heavy on his hands, as he sat up for his mother.

I need not tell you how the mother spent the weary hours. And yet I will tell you something. She used to wander out, at first as from without purpose, till she railed her thoughts, and brought all her energies to bear on the one point; then she went with a great patience along the least known ways to some new part of the town, looking wistfully with due esteem on the people’s faces; sometimes catching a glimpse of a figure which had a kind of momentary likeness to her child’s, and then following that figure with never wearying perseverance, till some light from shop or lane showed a cold strange face which was not her daughter’s.

Once or twice a kind hearted passy, by struck her lock of grey yearning woe, turned back and offered help, or asked her what she wanted. When so spoken to, she answered only, ‘You don’t know a poor girl there,’ said Lizzie Leigh, do you!’ and when they denied all knowledge, she shook her head, and went on again. I think they believed her to be crazy. But she never spoke first to any one. She sometimes took a few minutes rest on the duststeps, and sometimes (very seldom) covered her face, and cried; but she could not afford to lose time and chances in this way; while her eyes were blinded with tears, the last one might pass by unseen.

One evening, in the rich time of shortening autumn-days, Will saw an old man, who, without being absolutely drunk, could not go straight along the foot-path, and was mocked for his unsteadiness by gait of the idle boys of the neighbourhood. For his father’s sake Will regarded old age with tenderness, even when most degraded and removed from the street. But, which did not matter to that father; so he took the old man home, and seemed to believe his often-repeated assertions that he drank nothing but water. The stranger tried to stiffen himself up into steadieness as he drew nearer home, as if there were some one there, for whose respect he cared even in his half-intoxicated state, or whose feelings he feared to grieve. His house was unusually clean and neat even in outside appearance; threshold, window, and window-sill, were outward signs of some sort of spirit of purity within. Will was rewarded for his attention by a bright glance of thanks, and a blushing blush of shame, from a young chimney-sweeper. Will did not speak, or second her father’s hospitable invitations to him to be seated. She seemed unwilling that a stranger should witness her father’s grief on account of his drink; and Will could not bear to stay and see her distress. But when the old man, with many a slack shake of the hand, kept asking him to come again some other evening and see them, Will turned his eyes down ostat eye, and, though he could not express the meaning, he answered timidly, ‘If it’s agreeable to everybody, I’ll come—and thank ye.’ But there was no answer from the girl to whom this speech was in reality addressed; and Will left her sister, liking her all the better for never speaking.

He thought about her a great deal for the next day or two; he scolded himself for being so foolish as to think of her, and then fell to thinking of her again, and thought of her more than ever. He tried to deprive himself of the thought of her; he told himself she was not pretty, and then made indifferent answer that he did not look much better than any beauty of them; for he was not so country looking, so red-faced, so red-headed; while she was like a lady, with her smooth colourless complexion, her bright eyes, and her water spotless dress. Pretty, or not pretty, she had some charms towards her; he could not resist the impulse that made him wish to see her once more, and find out some fault which should unloose his heart from her unemotional keeping. But there she was, pure as snow, and maidenly as before. He sat and looked, and answered her father at cross purposes, while she drew more and more into the shadow of the window corner out of sight. Then the spirit that possessed him (it was not he himself, sure, that did so impudent a thing) made him get up and carry the candle to a different place, under the pretense of giving her more light in her hair. But, in reality, he saw her better; he did not go far enough to stand this much longer, but jumped up, and put his candle out in her little niece to bed; and surely, there never was, before or since, so troublesome a child of two years old; for, though Will said
an hour and a half longer, she never came down again. He won the father's heart, though, by his capacity as a listener, for some people are not at all particular, and so that they themselves may walk on un- der the other, are not so unreasonable as to expect attention to what they say.

Will did gather much this, however, from the old man's talk. He had been quite in a goutted line of life, but he had said of a money—many the gout that he had heard of; at least, any who did not mock at game and gone with gouted company.

This grand failure seemed to make a sequel when at the same time, but with a strong kind of pride. It appeared as if at present he rested from his past exceptions (in the bankrupt line), and depended on the leftover, who keeps the house for every young child. But all these particulars will only remembered and understood, when he had left the house; at the time he heard them, he was thinking of Susan. When he had made good his return, Mr. Palmer's, he was not sure you may be sure, without finding some reason for returning again and again. He listened to her father, he talked to the little niece, but he looked at Susan, and both while he listened and while he talked. Her father kept on insisting upon his former gentility, the details of which would have appeared very questionable to Will's mind, but the sweet, delicate, modest manner she throw of her grief at the time of all came near. She never spoke much; she was generally diligent at work; but when she moved it was so necessarily, as if she could not have been at work. She could not give a more graceful, motionless, still same on her, above Will's reach into some satiny and inaccessible air of glory—high above his own. She knew him, and she was made ac- quainted with the dark secret behind, of his sister's shame, which was kept over present to his mind by his mother's nightly search, among the caustic and forlorn, world and him with loathing, and not rather than alive. He spoke sharply to her, and received only such and deprecating an- swers as made him reproach himself, and still lose sight of peace of mind. This struggle could not last long without affect- ing his health; and Tom, his sole companion through the long evenings, noticed his in- creasing languor, his restless irritability, with perplexed anxiety, and at last called to call his mother's attention to his brother's haggard, care-worn looks. She listened with a started recollection of Will's claims upon her love. She noticed his increasing apathy, and half-checked sighs.

"Will, lad! what's come over thee?" said she to him, as he sat listlessly gazing into the fire. "There's no doubt the matter with me," said he, with a smile, renewing her remark. "No, lad, but there is." He did not speak again to contradict her; indeed she did not know if he had heard her, so unmoved did he look.

"Wouldn't like to go back to Upholose Farm," asked she, sorrowfully.

"It's just blackberry time," said Tom, Will shook his head. She looked up at him unsmiling, as if trying to read her expression of dependence and trace it back to its source.

"Will and Tom could go," said she; "I must stay here till I've found her, thou knowest," continued she, dropping her voice. He turned quickly round, and with the authority he at all times exercised over Tom, bade him begin to bed. When Tom had left the room he prepared to speak.

VALENTINE'S DAY AT THE POST-OFFICE.

Late in the afternoon of the 14th of Fe-
bruary, an individual who bore not the smallest resemblance to a despairing lover, or, indeed, to a lover in any state of mind, was seen to drop into the lock of St. Martin's street reception, and thrust his letters folded in his hip pocket. He did not look round to see if he were observed, but walked boldly into the shop with a third, and depositing them one penny.

For a few seconds without herInterval—this document—for it was an envelope was green—she retired from the com-
tray with extraordinary noisancetoud, and coolly walked on towards Ludgate-Hill.

Long moons he had brought him to St. Martin's, like a man who had an illuminating appointment. Sure enough, under the clock of the General Post-Office, he joined another, who eagerly asked,

"Have you done it?"

"Yes, answer was, 'I have!'

"Very well. Let us now watch the results."

Most people are aware that the Great National Post-Office in St. Martin-le-Grand is divided into three passages, whose sides are perforated with what is called the 'Window Department.' Here huge sheets go for letters, whose mass, written for newspapers, or wooden panels open for clerks to frame their mind's large, like giant visages in the sides of a Magic Lantern; and to answer inquiries, or receive unstamped paid letters. The southern side is devoted to the London District Post, and the northern to what still continues to be called the 'Inland Department,' although foreign, colonial, and other outlandish corre-

spondence now passes through it. It was with

the London District Branch that the two gentle- men first appeared to have business.

Having been led through a maze of offices and passages more or less dark, they found themselves—like knights-errant in a fairy tale

—"in an enormous hall, illumined by myriads of lights." Without being exactly transformed into statues, or stricken dumb, the two men, panting with the cold air, began to make such sounds as are made in making 'pats'—only these dead were covered with black cloth; they were reading books, talking, looking around, by magic, all the officials, apparently quite mused to doing any work, and not of all expectant of ever having anything to do, but did.

In a few minutes and without preparation, a great stir began at one of the offices for hall, and an immense train of private performers, in the highest state of excitement, poured in, getting up, on an immense scale, the performances of the two men. Each had a sack on his back; each had a letter in the air under his weight; and the bare sight of these sacks, as by magic, changed all the readers, all the talkers, all the wanderers, all the divers, all the coffee-drinkers, into a colony of human ants.

For the sacks were great deep-sea bags of letters tumbling in from the receiving- house. And they looked like whole books suddenly turned to visit the depot, ready for slaughter; for a ruthless individual stood at a table, with sleeves tucked up and knife in hand, who rapidly cut their throats, living letters. He devoured their contents, and finally skinned them. For a few seconds after our document had been opened, the letter we leave behind," said the bag-opener, in answer to an inquiry, "we are fined half-a-crown. That's how we turn them inside out.

The mysterious visitor, who had separated the letters that were disgorged. These were from all parts of London to all parts of London, and to the provinces and to the far-quarter of the globe. An average postman might guess the broad tenantry of the contents of a bag—one letter was a business letter; another was a bill of covers; business letters are in big envelopes, official letters in long ones, and lawyers' letters in none at all; the tinted and lea-boarded mail; various visas were closely scrutinized, some with white enameled annunciate announcer. When the Fleet-street dispatch arrived, the visitors tracked it, and the operations of the clerk who separated the three bundles of which it consisted were closely followed. With the prying curiosity which now only began to show itself, one of the intruders actually took a copy of the bill which accompanied the letters. It set forth in three lines that there were so many 'Stamped,' so many 'Prepaid,' and so many 'Unpaid.'

The clerk counted the stamped letters like lightning, and a flash of red gleaming past

showed the intruders that one of their epistles was safe. Suddenly the motion was stopped; the official had instinctively detected that one letter was insufficiently stamped, and the Queen's profile, and he weighed and taxed it doubled in a twinkling. Having proved the number of stamped letters to be exactly as per number of and in the hands, he went on checking off the proper number; the sender's green

envelope in the process. He then dealt with the unpaid, amongst which the lookers-on perceived their yellow one. The cash column clear, the letter was cast in a single thought, and a short-hand note was written 'quite correct,' dismissed the Fleet Street bill upon a fee, for the leisurely scrutiny of the Receiver-General's office. All the other letters, and all the other bills of all the other receiving-houses, were going through the same scrutiny at all the other offices; and these performances are repeated ten times in every day, all the year round, Sundays excepted.

"You perceived," said one of the two friends, "that in the rapid process of coming, our stamped letter glanced past like a meteor, while our money-paid and unpaid epistles stood for careful observation for a careful reading of them, and so the rest of Queer's head. Every officer through whose hands they pass—from the receiving-house-keeper to the clerks who deliver them at their destination, to the man who give and take a cash account of each. If the stamped letters can look at the other letters, it would save us, and therefore itself, some thousands a year.

"What are the proportions of the stamped to the un stamped letters which pass through all the post-offices in one year?"

"We can tell within a very near approximation to correctness—337,500,000 passed through the post-offices of the United Kingdom during last year, and to every 100 of them about fifty had stamps; 46 were prepaid with pence; and only 2 were committed to the box unpaid."

With the receipt of this information, the other had proceeded to forward letters to the next process; which was that of stamping on the sealed face, in red ink, the date and hour of dispatch. The letters were sealed with wax, like a pack of cards thrown across a table, and as the stamper's hand move, that he can mark 6000 in an hour. While defining the Queen's head on the other side, he counts as he stamps, till he enumerates fifty, when he does stamp on one side to put his black mark on a piece of plain paper. All these memoranda are afterwards collected by the president, who reckons fifty letters to every black mark, gets a number of all the letters that have passed through the office.

It was by this means that our friends
LIZZIE LEIGH.

CHAPTER II.

'Mother,' then said Will, 'why will you keep on thinking she's alive? If she is dead, there's nothing to do but be quiet. We've never heard anything of her since.'

"Oh, mother! don't speak so to me, or my head will break outright," said his mother, with a sob.

Then she calmed herself, for she feared to pursue the matter to her own belief.

'Then never asked, and you may be sure that little bit like thy father for me to tell without asking — I was all to be near Lizzie's old place that I set down and told her so that she had sent me poor last away without seeing it to you first; but she were in black, and looked her best. She said she could not find me in her heart to cheer up. But I did ask her about Lizzie. The master had been her turned away at a day's warning, (he's gone to Other place, I hope he'll meet with more mercy than he show me, we'll see about it, — I do,) and when the master asked her should she write to us, she says Lizzie's in the head; and when she spered her again, the master set out down on her knees, and begged her not to talk that way, as it would break my heart, (as it has done, Will — God knows it has!),' said the poor mother, shaking her head, and said she'd go down and see herself in the canal, as the missus wrote home —

"Well? I'd got a trace of my child,—the missus thought she'd gone to 'workhouse to be nursed; and there I went, — and there, sure enough, she was, and — they told her out as soon as she was strong enough to work, but what kin of work would be open to her, bad, and her baby to keep?"

Will listened to his mother's tale with deep sympathy, not unmixed wonder at the old bitter change; but the opening of her heart had unknobbed his, and after while he spoke.

'Think I'd go better go home. Tom can wear clothes, can you know it should stay too, but I cannot stay in the house near — her — without crying to see her — Susan Palmer.'

's the old! Mr. Palmer then told me on a daughter,' asked Mr. Leigh.

"Aye, he has, and I love her above a bit, and it's because I love her I want to leave Manchester. That's all." Mrs. Leigh tried to understand this speech.
was very cold, and when I'd seen as well as I could (it was past ten) that there was no one in the street, I brought it to and warmed it up. Father was in bed, but suspected I was cold, and said he'd take it to the workhouse the next morning, and flyted me sadly about it. But when morning came I could not bear to part with it; it had slept in my arms all night; and I've had what workhouse slang ups is. So I told father I'd give up going out working, and stay at home and keep school, if I might only keep the baby; and after awhile, he said I earned enough for him to live comfortably, he'd let me do as I liked, but he's never taken him to. Now, dear, what a frightful trouble— I've but a little more to tell—and maybe I'm wrong in telling it; but I used to work next door to Mrs. Lomax's, in Bradstreet-square, and the servants were all thick together; and I heard she and her better (they called her) being sent away. Now, I don't know that ever I saw her; but the time would be about fitting to this child's age, and I've sometimes fancied it was her's. And now, I will you see all the little clothes that came with her—blew her!

But Mrs. Leigh had fainted. The strange joy and shame, and grasping love for the little child had overpowered her; it was some time before Susan could bring her round. There was she all trembling; sick impatience to look at the little frocks. Among them was a little envelope of paper which Susan had forgotten to name, that had been pinned to the bundle. Out it was screwed in a round stiff hand.

"Call her Anne. She does not earn much, and takes a deal of notices. God bless you and forgive me."

The writing was no clue at all; the name "Anne," common though it was, seemed something to build upon. But Mrs. Leigh recognized one of the frocks instantly, as being made out of parts of a gown that she and her daughter had bought together in Rochdale.

She stood up, and stretched out her hand to the child "in the attitude of blessing over Susan's bent head."

"God bless you, and show you His mercy in your need, as you have shown it to this little child."

She took the little creature in her arms, and smoothed away her sad looks to a smile, and kissed it fondly, saying over and over again, "Nanny, Nanny, my little Nanny."

Last the child was soothed, and looked in her face and smiled back again.

"It has her eyes," she said to Susan.

She never saw her to the best of my knowledge. I think it must be her from the frock. But where can she be?"

"God knows," said Mrs. Leigh; "I dare not think she's dead. I'm sure she isn't."

"No! she's not dead. Every now and then there's a little thrush in under our door, with may be two hands, but once it was half-self-sufficient. Altogether I've got thirty-nine shillings warrant for Nanny. I never touch it, but I've often thought the poor mother feels near to God when she brings this money. Father wanted to take the paper to the workhouse, but I said No, for I was afraid if she was watched she'd not tell me, and it seemed such a holy thing to be checking her in, I couldn't find in my heart to do it.

"Oh, if we could but find her! I'd take her in my arms, and we'd just sit down and die together."

"Nay, don't speak so!" said Susan gently, "for all that's come and gone, she may turn right at last. Mary Magdalen did, you know."

But father was nearer right than Will. He thought there was no chance of looking on him again if you knew about Lizzie. But then 'tis not a Pharisie."

"I'm sorry he thought I could be so hard, said Susan in a low voice, and colouring up seem like a confession of her feelings to a third person. Accordingly she turned the conversation on the child."

"I'm sure he could not help loving Nanny," said she. "There never was such a good little creature, don't you think she'd win his heart if he knew she was alive and perhaps bring him to think kindly on his sister?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Leigh, shaking her head. "He has a turn in his eyes like his father, that makes me ——. He's right good, though. But you see I've never been a good one at managing folk; one severe look turns me sick, and then I say just the wrong thing, I'm so fluttered. Now I should like nothing better than to take Nanny home with me, but Tom knows nothing but that his sister is dead, and I've not the knack of speaking rightly to Will. I dare not do it, and that's the truth. But you must not think badly of Will. He's so good-humored, that he can't help understanding how and above all, I'm sure he loves you dearly."

"I don't think I could part with Nanny,"

said Susan, anxious to stop this revelation of Will's attachment to herself. "He'll come round to her soon; he can't fail; and I'll keep a sharp look-out after the poor mother, and try and catch her the next time she comes with her little parcel."

"Aye, lass! we must get hold of her; my Lizzie. I love thee dearly for thy kindness to her child; but, if thou canst catch her for me, I'll pray for thee when I'm near my death to speak words, and while I live, I'll tell thee all."

"Aye, lass! we must get hold of her; my Lizzie. I love thee dearly for thy kindness to her child; but, if thou canst catch her for me, I'll pray for thee when I'm near my death to speak words, and while I live, I'll tell thee all."

"What are you?" stammered the officer, "How dare you to step between me and death!"

"I am a poor, humble mechanic; I answered the man who works from fourteen to sixteen hours a day, and yet finds it hard to earn a living. My wife is dead—my daughter was tempted away from me—and I am a lone man. As I have nobody to live for, and have tried to content myself with a quiet existence, I am not, to be the first cause of doing evil; but what are you? Have you encountered cannon-balls and death in all shapes, and now want the strength and courage to meet the curse of idleness?"

The officer was moving off with some conceived words, but the mechanic took him by the arm, and threatening to hand him over to the police if he resisted, led him drooping away.

This mechanic's work was that of a turner, and he lived in a dark cellar, where he tolled at his lathe from morning to night. He had been accused of some wrong, and was anxious to escape; but the mechanic refused it and persisted.

He accordingly took the morbid gentleman down into his dark cellar, and set him to work at his lathe. The officer began very languidly, and soon rose to depart. Whereupon, the mechanic took the gun on again, and, aware that if he did not do his hour's work for him, in return for saving his life, he would instantly consign him to a policeman, and denounce him for attempting to commit suicide. At this the officer was so convinced, that he at once consented to do the work.
fast, like two wild beasts in dens, trying to get glimpses of each other through the bars, to the unutterable interest of Mr. Wheelers.

But when the Hunchback said he had got the certificate which rendered Eva's marriage illegal, and when More raved to have it given to him, and when the Hunchback (as some persons of masculine spirit in him to the last) persisted in going into his dying agonies in a remote corner of his cage, and took unquieted trouble not to die anywhere near the bars that were within More's reach; Mr. Wheelers applauded to the echo. And last the Hunchback was persuaded to stick the certificate on the point of a dagger, and hand it in; and that done, dead, extremely knuckled, knocking himself violently about, to the very last gasp, and certainly making the most of all the life that was in him.

Still, More had yet to get out of his den before he could turn this certificate to any account. His first step was to make such a violent uproar as to bring into his presence a certain "Norman Free Lance" who one day watched and waited in the street to inform this warrior, in the style of the Police Letter-Writer, that "circumstances had occurred," rendering it necessary that he should be immediately let out. The warrior declining to submit himself to the force of those circumstances, Mr. More proposed to him, as a gentleman and a man of honour, to allow him to step out into the gallery, and there adjust an old feud subsisting between them, by single combat. The "Norman Free Lance," consenting to this, the proposal was shot from behind by the comic man, whom he bitterly designated as "a snip" for that action, and then died exceedingly game.

All this occurred in one day—the bridal day of the Lady of Lambry; and now Mr. Wheelers concentrated all his energies into a focus, bent forward, looked straight in front of him, and held his breath. For, the night of the eventful day being come, Mr. Wheelers was admitted to the "bridal chamber" and left to behold a marriage, a table, and a married couple, and a particularly long and desolate four-post bedstead. Here the Lady, having dismissed her bridesmaids, was interrupted in deploiring her unhappy fate, by the entrance of her husband; and masters, under these circumstances, were proceeding to very desperate extremities, when the Lady (by this time aware of the existence of the certificate) found a dagger on the dressing-table, and said, "Attempt to confound me in thy pernicious embrace, and this polgarrimeter—" &c. He did attempt it, however, for all that, and he and the Lady were dragging another about like wrestlers, when Mr. More broke open the door, and entering with the whole domestic establishment and a Middlesex magistrate, took him into custody and claimed his bride.

LIZZIE LEIGH.

In Four Chapters. Chapter III.

That night Mrs. Leigh stopped at home, that only night for many months. Even Tom the scholar, looked up from his books in amazement; but then he remembered that Wheelers had not been well, and that his mother's attention having been called to the circumstance, it was at once proposed to go to his bed and take care of him. And no watching could be more tender, or more complete. Her loving eye seemed never averted from his face; and, grave, sad, care-worn face. When Tom went to bed the mother left her seat, and going up to Wheelers sat looking at the fire, but not seeing it, she kissed his forehead, and said,

"Well lad, I've been to see Susan Palmer. She felt the start under her hand which was placed on his shoulder, but he was silent for a minute or two. Then he said,

"What took you there, mother?"

"Why, my lad, it was likely I should wish to see one you cared for; I did not put myself forward. I put on my Sunday clothes, and tried to behave as you like me. I like you, and if you try at first; but after, I forget all."

She rather wished that he would question her as to what made her forget all. But he said,

"How was she looking, mother?"

"Well, thou seest I never set eyes on her before, but she's a good gentle looking creature, and I love her dearly, as I reason.

Will looked up with momentary surprise; for his mother was too shy to be usually taken with strangers. But after it was natural in this case, for who could look at Susan without loving her? So still he did not ask any questions, and his poor mother had to take courage, and try again to introduce the subject near to her heart. But how?

"Well!" said she (jerking it out, in sudden despair of her own powers to lead to what she wanted to say), "I told her all.

"Mother! you've praised me," said he standing up, and standing opposite to her with a stern white look of almost his face.

"No! my own dear lad; dunt look so scared, I have not praised you," she exclaimed, placing her two hands on his shoulders, looking fondly into his face. "She's not one to harden her heart against a mother's sorrow. My own lad, she's too good for that. She's not one to judge and scorn the looser. She's too deep read in her New Testament for that. Take courage, Will; and then mays, for I watched her well, though it is not for one woman to let out another's secret. Sit down then, lad, for thou look'st very pale.

He sat down. His mother drew a stool towards him, and sat at his feet.

"Did you tell her about Lizzie, then? asked he, hoarse and low.

"Yes, I told her; and she felt a crying, was very sorry, and the poor wench's sin. And then a light came into her face, trembling and quivering with some new glad thought; and what dost thou think it was, Will lad? Nay, I'll not mistake but that thy heart will give thanks as mine did, afore God and His angels, for her great goodness. That little Naany is not her niece, she's our Lizzie's own child, my little grandchild. She could no longer restrain her tears, and they fell hot and fast, but still she looked into his face.

"Did she know it was Lizzie's child? I do not comprehend," said he, flushing red.

"She knows now; she did not at first, but took the little helpless creature in, out of her own pitiful heart, guessing only that it was the child of shame, and she's worked it, and kept it, and tended it ever sin it was a mere baby, and loves it fondly. Will! won't you love it? I asked her bashfully.

"He was silent for a minute; then he said, "I'll love pitiful children, for all these things startle me. To think of Susan having to do with such a child!"

"Aye, Will! and to think (as may be yet) of Susan having to do with the child's mother! For she is tender and pitiful, and speaks hopefully of my lost one, and will try and find her for me. She comes, as she does sometimes, to thrust the door, and say you must come. I am your mother, and I dare to command you, because I know I am in the right and that God is on my side. If He should help the poor wandering child to Susan, He may help the dying, and sorrowful, led by that good angel to us once more, thou shalt never say a casting-up word to her about her sin, but he tender and helpful towards one who was lost and found, may God's blessing rest on thee, and so may all thou know Susan home as thy wife.

She stood, no longer as the maids, imploring, gentle mother, but firm and dignified, as if the interpreter of God's will. Her manner was as if to say, that it were all Will's pride and stubbornness. He rose softly while she was speaking, and bent his head as if in reverence at her words, and the solemn injunction which they conveyed. When she had spoken, she said in so subdued a voice that she was almost surprised at the sound. "Mother, I will!"

"I may be dead and gone,—but all the same, thou wilt take home the wandering sinner, and heal up her sorrows, and lead her to her own pitiful heart, for all these, can speak no more; I'm turned very faint.

He placed her in a chair; he ran for water. She opened her eyes and smiled.

God bless you, Will! Oh! I am so happy. It seems as if she were found, my heart is so filled with gladness.

That night Mr. Palmer sat out late and long. Susan was afraid that he was at his old haunts and habits,—getting tip at some public-house; and this thought oppressed her, and so much to make her happy, in the conscience that she loved her. She sat up long, and then she went to bed, leaving all arranged as well as she could for her father's return. She looked at the little rosy sleeping girl who was her bed-fellow, with a tender tenderness, and with many a prayerful thought. The light was entwined her neck as she lay down, for Susan was a light sleeper, and was conscious that she was loved with all the power of that sweet, childish heart, was near her, by her, and through her, she was too sleepy to utter any of her half-formed words.

And by-and-by she heard her father come home, stumbling uncertain, trying first the windows, and next the door-fastenings, with many a loud incorrect murmur. The little innocent turned around her seemed all the
sweetest and more lovely, when she thought sadly of her erring father. And presently he called aloud for a light; she had left matches, and all the burning on the dresser, but, feeling of some accident from fire, in his unusually intoxicated state, she now got up softly, and putting on a cloak, went down to his assistance.

Also the little arms that were unclosed from her short neck belonged to a light, easily awakened sleeper. Nammy missed her darling Susy, and terrified at being left alone in the vast mysterious darkness, which had no bounds, but encased her in the lukewarm bed, and Russia in her night-gown, towards the door. There was a light below, and there was Susy and safety! So she went towards the steep abrupt stairs, and then dashed in the door, and she stood, she wavered, she fell! Down on her head on the stone floor she fell! Susan fell to her, and spoke soft, entreaty, loving words at first; but all the words covered up the blue violets of eyes, and there was no moisture came out of the pale lips. The warm tears that ran down did not awaken her; she lay stiff, and weary with her short life, on Susan's knee as her terror. She carried her upstairs, and laid her tenderly in bed; she dressed herself most hastily, with her trembling fingers. Her father was asleep on the settle downstairs; and naddes, and worse than needless, she went out of the door, and down the quiet resounding street, towards the nearest doctor's house. Quickly she went; but as quickly a shadow followed, as if impelled by some sudden terror. Susan shut the door of the house; the shadow crowded near. The doctor looked out from an upstairs window.

'A little child has fallen down stairs at No. 9, Crown-street, and is very ill,—dying, I am afraid. The baby is sick, sir; come directly. No. 9, Crown-street.'

'I'll be there directly,' said he, and shut the window.

'For that God you have just spoken about, for his sake,—tell me are you Susan Palmer? Is it my child that lies a-dying? said the shadow, springing forwards, and clutching poor Susan's arm.

'Is it a little child of two years old,—I do not know whose it is,—I am my own. Come with me, whoever you are; come with me.'

The two sped along the silent streets,—as silent as the heart within them. They entered the house; Susan took up the child, and carried it upstairs. The other followed. She stood with wild glaring eyes by the bedside, never looking at Susan, but hungrily gazing at the sick child. She stooped down, and put her hand tight on her own heart, as if to still its beating, and bent her ear to the pale lips. Whatever the result was, she did not speak; but threw off the bed-clothes with which Susan had tenderly covered up the little creature, and felt its left side.

Then she threw up her arms with a cry of wild despair.

'She is dead! she is dead!'

She looked so fierce, so mad, so haggard, that for an instant Susan was terrified; but the next, the holy God had put courage into her heart, and her pure arms were round that miserable wretch, whose tears were falling fast and warm upon her breast. But she was thrown off with violence.

'You killed her—you strangled her—you fell down those stairs! you killed her!'

Susan cleared off the thick mist before her, and gazing at the mother with her clear, sweet, angel-eyes, said mournfully—

'Oh, I would have laid down my own life for her.'

'Oh, the murder is on my soul!' exclaimed the wild bearded mother, with the fierce impetuousity of one who has none to love her and none to regard to whom might teach self-restraint.

'N​umbs!' said Susan, her finger on her lips.

'Here is the doctor. God may suffer her to go.'

The poor mother turned sharply round. The doctor resumed the chair. All! that mother was right; the little child was really dead and gone.

And when he confirmed her judgment, the mother fell back into the arm of Susan. The little child, with her deep grief, had to forget herself, and forget her darling (her charge for years), and question the doctor what she must do with the poor wretch, who lay on the floor in such extreme of misery.

'She is the mother!' said she.

'Why did not she take better care of her child?' asked he, almost angrily.

Susan had said, 'The little child slept with me; and it was 1 that left her.'

'I will go back and make up a composing draught; and while I am away you must get her to bed.

She took out some of her own clothes, and softly undressed the still powerless form. There was no other bed in the house but the one in which her father slept. So she tenderly lifted the body of her darling; and was going to take it down stairs, but the mother opened her eyes, and seeing what she was about, she said,

'I am not worthy to touch her, I am so wicked; have spoken to you as I never should have spoken; but I think you are very good; may I have my own child to lie in my arms for a little while?'

Her voice was so strange a contrast to what it had been before she had gone into the fit that Susan hardly recognised it; it was now so unspeakably soft, so irresistibly pleasing, the features too had lost their fierce expression, and were almost as placid as death. Susan could not speak, but she carried the little child, and laid it in its mother's arms; then as she looked at them, something overpowered her, and she knelt down, crying aloud,

'Oh, my God, my God, have mercy on her, and forgive, and comfort her.'

But the mother kept smiling, and stroking the little face, murmuring soft tender words, as if it were alive; she was going mad, Susan thought; but she prayed on, and on, and ever still she prayed with streaming eyes.

The doctor came with this draught. The mother took it, with dole unconsciousness of its nature as medicine. The doctor sat by her; and soon she fell asleep. Then he rose softly, and beckoning Susan to the door, he spoke to her thereto, and ducked, and left still. She took no heed of the little corpse over which Susan paused, but she went straight to the bed, and withdrawing the curtain, saw Lizzie—but not the former Lizzie, bright, gay, buoyant, and confident. This Lizzie was old before her time; her beauty was gone; deep lines of care, and alas! of want (or thus the mother imagined) were painted on her cheek, and she seemed made smooth, when last she gladdened her mother's eyes. Even in her sleep she bore the look of woo and despair which was the prevalent expression of her face by day; even in her sleep she had not lost her beauty.

But Mrs. Leigh did not answer. So near to the ascertaining if it were her lost child or no, she could not be arrested, but pressed onwards with trembling steps and a beating, flustered, haggard, face. Then she entered, and swept on, and swept on, and swept on. Then the mother, not the former mother, was sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth, and sunk to earth.

'Not all the scalding tears of care
Shall wash away that vision fair;
Not all the thousand thoughts that rise,
Not all the sighs that dim her eyes,
Shall e'en repair the state
Of that little angel-face.'

And then she remembered what remained to be done. She saw that all was right in the house; her father was still dead asleep on the settle, in spite of all the noise of the night. She went out through the quiet streets, and down the house-place. She knew down before the astonished Mrs. Leigh, and cried as she had never done before; but the miserable night had overpowered her, and she could not help her hand to speak, and even now that the pressure seemed removed, could not find the power to speak.

'My poor dear! What has made thy heart so sure as to come and cry a-this-ons? So weeping, so telling, so poor, weak, if thou canst not speak yet. It will ease the heart, and then thou canst tell me.'

'Nanny is dead!' said Susan. 'I left her to go to father, and she fell down stairs, and never breathed again. Oh, that's my sorrow! but I've more to tell. Her mother is come— is in our house! Come and see if it's your Lizzie.' Mrs. Leigh could not speak, but, trembling, put on her things, and went with Susan in dizzy haste back to Crown-street.
about, and of the whole state of affairs. She asked her messenger to tell him to come and speak to her,—that his mother and sister should come to see her. She said that her father ran on to have a gossip at the nearest coach-staunt, and to relate as many of the night’s adventures as he knew; for as yet he was in ignorance of the watchman and the watchers who silently passed away the hours upstairs.

At dinner-time Will came. He looked red, glad, impatient, excited. Susan stood calm and white before him, her soft, loving eyes gazing strangely into his.

"Will," said she, in a low, quiet voice, "your sister is upstairs."

"My sister!" said he, as if affrighted at the idea, and losing his glad look in one of gloom. Susan saw it, and her heart ached a little, but she went on as calm to all appearance as ever.

"She was little Nancy’s mother, as perhaps you know. Poor little Nancy was killed last night by a fall down stairs! All the calumny was gone; all the suspected feeling was displayed in spite of every effort. She sat down, and hid her face from him, and cried bitterly. He forgot everything but the strain, the longing to comfort her. He put his arm round her waist, and bent over her. But all he could say, was, ‘Oh, Susan, how can I comfort you? Don’t take on so—pray don’t!’ He never changed the words, but the tone varied; every word was more soothing than the last, as though he were regaining her power over herself; and she wiped her eyes, and once more looked upon him with her own quiet, earnest, unfeared gaze.

"Your sister was near the house. She came in on hearing the footsteps in the darkness. She is asleep now, and your mother is watching her. I told you to see your mother."

"No!" said he. "I would rather see none but thee. Mother told me thou knewest all."

His eyes were downcast in their shame.

But the holy pure, did not lower or vail her eyes.

She said, ‘Yes, I know all—but all her affection.’ Think what they must have been?

He made answer low and stern, ‘She des- peted them all; every jot.’

‘In the eye of God, perhaps she does. He is the judge: we are not.’

‘Oh!’ said she with a sudden burst, ‘Will Leigh! I have thought so well of you; don’t go and make me think you cruel and hard. Goodness is not goodness unless there is mercy and tenderness with it. There is your mother who has been nearly heart-broken, now full of rejoicing over her child—think of your mother.’

‘I do think of her,’ said he. ‘I remember the way you used to look after her. Thon should give me time. I would do right in time. I never think it o’er in quiet. But I will do what is right and fitting, never fear, though I have spoken out very plain to me; and I misdoubted me, Susan; I love thee so, that mine words cut; but rising above the_old promises, it was because not even for love of thee, would I say what I was not feeling; and at first I could not feel as thou wouldst have me. I was not cruel; I was not even for love of thee, I had been should I have na’ have grieved as I have done.’

‘He made as if he were going away; and indeed he did feel he would rather think it over in quiet; But, Susan, grieved at her is the fondness, words which had all the appearance of harshness, went a step or two or more—-—and then, all over blushed, said in a low soft whisper—

‘Oh Will! I beg thy pardon. I am very sorry—very sorry—’

Who had always drawn back, and been so reserved, said this in the very softest manner; with eyes now uplifted beseechingly, now dropped to the ground. Her sweet con- fession told more than words could do; as Will turned back, all joyous in his certainty of being beloved, and took her in his arms and kissed her.

‘My own Susan!’ he said.

Meanwhile the mother watched her child in the room above.

It was late in the afternoon before she awoke; for the sleeping draught had been very powerful. The instant she awoke, her eyes were bright, as though she was unfeeling as if she were fascinated; Mrs. Leigh did not turn away; nor move. For it seemed as if motion would unlock the story command over herself, which was so imperfectly said, and was by—and-by Lizzie cried out in a piercing voice of agony.

‘Mother, don’t look at me! I have been so wicked!’ and instantly she hid her face, and groveled on the bed, and lay like one dead—so motionless was she.

Mrs. Leigh knelt down by the bed, and spoke in the most soothing tone.

Lizzie, dear, don’t speak so. I’m thy mother, darling; hear of me. I never left off loving thee, Lizzie. I was always a-thinking of thee. Thy father for-gave thee afore he died! (There was a little start here,) but no sound was heard. ‘Lizzie, lass, I’ll do nought for thee; I’ll live for thee only don’t be afraid of me. Whate’er thou art or hast been, we’ll ne’er speak on.’ We’ll leave th’ and times behind us, and go back to the Upcose Farm. I left it to thee, my lass; and God has led me to thee. Blessed be His name. And God is good too, Lizzie. Thou hast not forgot thy Bible, I’ll be bound; for thou went always a scholar. I’m no reader, but I hearn oft them texts a comforting to me. We’ll leave th’ a day to myself, Lizzie, lass, don’t hide thy head so, it’s thy mother a speaking to thee. Thy little child clung to me only yesterday; and if it’s gone to be an

angel, it will speak to God for thee. Nay, don’t sub a that ‘a’s; thou shalt have it again in Heaven; I know thou’ll strive to get there, for thy little Nancy’s sake—and listen! I’ll tell thee God’s promises to them that are pined—only don’t be afraid.’

Mrs. Leigh folded her hands, and strove to speak very clearly, while she repeated every tender and merciful text she could remember. She could tell from the breathing that her daughter was listening; but she was so distant and sick herself when she had ended, that she could not go on speaking. It was all she could do to keep from crying aloud.

At last she heard her daughter’s voice.

‘Where have they taken her to?’ she asked.

‘She is down stairs. So quiet, and peaceful, and happy she looks.’

‘Could she speak? Oh, if God—if I might but have heard her little voice! Mother, I used to dream of May I see her once again—Oh mother, if I strive very hard, and God is very merciful, and I go to heaven, I shall not know her—I shall not know my own self!’ she cried, in words so strange, and cling to Susan Palmer and to you. Oh woe! Oh woe!’ She shook with exceeding sorrow.

In her earnestness of speech she had un- covered her face, and tried to read Mrs. Leigh’s thoughts through her looks. And when she saw those aged eyes brimming full of tears, and marked the quivering lips, she threw her arms round the faithful mother of her wept, and seemed as though she had done all a child could do; but with a deeper, a more wretched grief.

Her mother h attacked her breast; and called her as if she were a baby, and she gave way and cried.

They sat thus for a long, long time. At last Susan Palmer came up with some tea and bread and butter for Mrs. Leigh. She watched the mother feed her sick, unwilling child. She watched, and longed to do for her; not for herself; they neither of them took notice of Susan’s presence. That night they lay in each other’s arms; but Susan slept on the ground beside them.

They took their time (the little unconscious sacrifice, whose early calling-home had reclaimed her poor wandering mother) to the hills, which in her life-time she had never seen. They dared not lay her by the stern gate of the churchyard, where they bore her to a lone moonlight grave-

yard, where long ago the quakers used to bury their dead. They laid her there on the sunny slope, where the earliest spring-flowers break from the earth.

Will and Susan live at the Upcose Farm. Mrs. Leigh and Lizzie dwell in a cottage so secluded that, until you drop into the very hollow where it is placed, you do not see it. Tom is a schoolmaster in lodgings, and he and Will help to support their mother. I only know that, if the cottage be hidden in a green hollow of the hills, every sound of sorrow in the whole upland is heard there—every call of suffering or of sickness is help to be, by a sad, gentle-looking woman, who rarely speaks (and when she does, her smile is more sad than other people’s tears), but who comes out of her seclusion whenever there’s a shadow in any household. Many hearts bless Lizzie Leigh, but she—she prays always and ever for forgiveness—and for gadgery which may enable her to see her child once more. Mrs. Leigh is quiet and happy. Lizzie is to her eyes something precious,—as the lost pieces of silver—found once more. Susan is this bright one who lights her with all. Children grow around her and call her blessed. One is called Nancy. Her, Lizzie often takes to the sunny graveyard in the uplands, and while the little creature gathers the daisies, and Lizzie sits by a little grave, and weeps bitterly.

THE SEASONS.

A SABBATOCH child that she amends the noon,

Or darts her form with a laugh that drooping amens,

Singing her little songs, while softly round

Along the grass the chequered sunshine plays.

All beauty that is thrown in womanhood,

Facing a summer garden’s fourteen walls,

That slope smooth and white while flaming her flushing cheek from one who talks.

A happy mother with her fair faced girl,

In whose sweet spring again her youth she sees,

With about red dance and laugh and bound and song.

Singing to an autumn orchard’s laden trees.

An aged woman in a wintry room;

Frost on the pane,—without, the whirling snow;

Reading old letters of her far off youth,

Of pleasures past and joys of long ago.

SHORT CUTS ACROSS THE GLOBE.

To a person who wishes to sail to California an inspection of the map of the world will be a good revealing peculiarity. The Atlantic Ocean is the nearest; and being separated from the Pacific by the great western continent, it is impossible to sail to the opposite coasts without going thousands of miles out of his way; for he must double Cape Horn. Yet a closer inspection of the map will discover that, but for one little barrier of land, which is in size but as a grain of sand to the bed of an ocean, the passage would be direct. Were it not for that small neck of land, which is the island of Suez, he would not be obliged to double the Cape of Good Hope. The Eastern difficulty has