

which was near its meridian, was softening all their hard outlines till they blended with the blue sky. I raised my eyes from the beauty around me to my companion's face, and saw there a look which made me understand all beauty as I had never done before. There was no appeal for sympathy to me; she looked far away as though she were gathering the whole scene into her very being; then she smiled as a butterfly touched her hand on its way across the heather, and came down the little mound in silence with the same sweet, beautiful, calm look on her face.

At a lonely turn in the road between the hills we met two rough-looking men. They came toward us with a somewhat threatening aspect. I felt anxious for a moment, and thought, with some satisfaction, of my thorn stick, as the dispatch box might arouse their covetous desires. They were strong men, two to one, and I looked furtively at the lady as one of them began in the usual begging whine to demand money. But there was something in her face which seemed to make them uncomfortable. She gave them a small coin and said to them, very kindly—

"You look very tired with this warm day's walking."

They mumbled some thanks and passed on.

"Evil faces," I remarked.

"Very suffering ones," she said, "and they seemed so tired and weary."

We walked on in silence for some time after this adventure, and were gradually coming down into a hollow, where a small village nestled—a straggling little street, a pink-washed Methodist chapel, called "Zion," a bright, rapid stream, a few beech and fir trees, and an old stone bridge with a quaint little inn near to it, a glad sight to us as we both needed food and rest.

I went into the small inn to order something prepared for us, and was detained a little while by the talkative old landlady. When I came out I found the lady sitting on a pile of felled timber by the side of the stream, with a group of the village children around her. The youngest was on her knee, with his curly head nestling in her arms. The others stood open-mouthed as she told them a fairy tale. She was the most radiant of them all, and I heard her sweet voice ringing out clearly—

"And the king was very sad, for the ogre would only be satisfied with the best one that lived in the village."

I could not interrupt her, she was so absorbed with her story, so I wandered idly along the little stream, hearing the wondering shouts of the children from time to time as I pursued my way. As I strolled back toward the inn she came to meet me, with the children hanging to her skirts, the youngest, who

had sat on her knee, clinging to her hand and dragging her forward.

"They are all going blackberrying," she said, "and would like me to join them; but I can not, as I must have food and rest. We shall pass the copse where they will be picking as we go on our way. It is over there on the side of the hill. Yes, Georgie, we will stop and see how many blackberries you have picked," and she loosed her hand gently from the chubby one of the child and stroked his golden curls.

"How do you know his name?" I asked.

"Why he told me his name, of course. What is your name, little man?"

"Dordie Ebbans," was the prompt answer.

"There," she replied, "what could be more decisive? Georgie Evans—and Georgie has a guinea pig and a blind grandmother at home, and his father works down in the pits and brings home money for Georgie and his mother."

There was a little patch of garden in the front of the inn, and I had our luncheon spread in a little arbor formed of trained apple trees on which the fruit was fast ripening. A few marigolds, some daisies and one glorious red rose tree covered with blossoms composed the little garden, and here we rested and ate our meal. A half blind and lame cur crept to her feet. She fed and patted it with her gentle hand and said—

"That is probably the first pat of kindly interest that wretched brute has ever had."

"Perhaps if it had had more friends it would not look so ill favored."

"At any rate it needs all the more friends now. See how hungry the poor thing is," she replied, and gathering some of the remains of the meal put them down before the dog. Then she turned to me and said, eagerly—

"I must press on, it gets late and we still have six miles to go. It will be pleasanter walking now, but need I take you farther? Surely you ought to turn back, now."

"No, I will not leave you," I said, "I will take the train from Tredegar."

I paid the little bill and we again took our road. We had to pass by the copse where the children were blackberrying. I remember to this moment how the afternoon sun was touching the hills, which were growing steeper and more rugged as we began to ascend again. We left the little village behind us literally bathed in sunshine. For some distance, as we mounted the path, we could hear the rippling of the stream, as it flowed over the large, round stones which formed its bed. We came to a turn in the road which would presently hide the distant view, and here we lingered. She stood silently gazing un-