Chapter XXXVII - Sunshine

It was very, well for Paulina to decline further correspondence with Graham till her father had sanctioned the intercourse. But Dr. Bretton could not live within a league of the Hotel Crecy, and not contrive to visit there often. Both lovers meant at first, I believe, to be distant; they kept their intention so far as demonstrative courtship went, but in feeling they soon drew very near.

All that was best in Graham sought Paulina; whatever in him was noble, awoke, and grew in her presence. With his past admiration of Miss Fanshawe, I suppose his intellect had little to do, but his whole intellect, and his highest tastes, came in question now. These, like all his faculties, were active, eager for nutriment, and alive to gratification when it came.

I cannot say that Paulina designedly led him to talk of books, or formally proposed to herself for a moment the task of winning him to reflection, or planned the improvement of his mind, or so much as fancied his mind could in any one respect be improved. She thought him very perfect; it was Graham himself, who, at first by the merest chance, mentioned some book he had been reading, and when in her response sounded a welcome harmony of sympathies, something, pleasant to his soul, he talked on, more and better perhaps than he had ever talked before on such subjects. She listened with delight, and answered with animation. In each successive answer, Graham heard a music waxing finer and finer to his sense; in each he found a suggestive, persuasive, magic accent that opened a, scarce-known treasure-house within, showed him unsuspected power in his own mind, and what was better, latent goodness in his heart. Each liked the way in which the other talked; the voice, the diction, the expression pleased; each keenly relished the flavour of the other's wit; they met each other's meaning with strange quickness, their thoughts often matched like carefully-chosen pearls. Graham had wealth of mirth by nature; Paulina possessed no such inherent flow of animal spirits - unstimulated, she inclined to be thoughtful and pensive - but now she seemed merry as a lark; in her lover's genial presence, she glanced like some soft glad light. How beautiful she grew in her happiness, I can hardly express, but I wondered to see her. As to that gentle ice of hers - that reserve on which she had depended; where was it now? Ah! Graham would not long bear it; he brought with him a generous influence that soon thawed the timid, self-imposed restriction.

Now were the old Bretton days talked over; perhaps brokenly at first, with a sort of smiling diffidence, then with opening candour and still growing confidence. Graham had made for himself a better opportunity than that he had wished me to give; he had earned

independence of the collateral help that disobliging Lucy had refused; all his reminiscences of 'little Polly' found their proper expression in his own pleasant tones, by his own kind and handsome lips; how much better than if suggested by me.

More than once when we were alone, Paulina would tell me how wonderful and curious it was to discover the richness and accuracy of his memory in this matter. How, while he was looking at her, recollections would seem to be suddenly quickened in his mind. He reminded her that she had once gathered his head in her arms, caressed his leonine graces, and cried out, 'Graham, I *do* like you!' He told her how she would set a footstool beside him, and climb by its aid to his knee. At this day he said he could recall the sensation of her little hands smoothing his cheek, or burying themselves in his thick mane. He remembered the touch of her small forefinger, placed half tremblingly, half curiously, in the cleft in his chin, the lisp, the look with which she would name it 'a pretty dimple,' then seek his eyes and question why they pierced so, telling him he had a 'nice, strange face; far nicer, far stranger, than either his mamma or Lucy Snowe.'

'Child as I was,' remarked Paulina, 'I wonder how I dared be so venturous. To me he seems now all sacred, his locks are inaccessible, and, Lucy, I feel a sort of fear, when I look at his firm, marble chin, at his straight Greek features. Women are called beautiful, Lucy; he is not like a woman, therefore I suppose he is not beautiful, but what is he, then? Do other people see him with my eyes? Do *you* admire him?'

'I'll tell you what I do, Paulina,' was once my answer to her many questions. 'I never see him. I looked at him twice or thrice about a year ago, before he recognised me, and then I shut my eyes; and if he were to cross their balls twelve times between each day's sunset and sunrise, except from memory, I should hardly know what shape had gone by.'

'Lucy, what do you mean?' said she, under her breath.

'I mean that I value vision, and dread being struck stone blind.'

It was best to answer her strongly at once, and to silence for ever the tender, passionate confidences which left her lips sweet honey, and sometimes dropped in my ear - molten lead. To me, she commented no more on her lover's beauty.

Yet speak of him she would; sometimes shyly, in quiet, brief phrases; sometimes with a tenderness of cadence, and music of voice exquisite in itself; but which chafed me at times miserably; and then, I know, I gave her stern looks and words; but cloudless happiness had dazzled her native clear sight, and she only thought Lucy - fitful.

'Spartan girl! Proud Lucy!' she would say, smiling at me. 'Graham says you are the most peculiar, capricious little woman he knows; but yet you are excellent; we both think so.'

'You both think you know not what,' said I. 'Have the goodness to make me as little the subject of your mutual talk and thoughts as possible. I have my sort of life apart from yours.' 'But ours, Lucy, is a beautiful life, or it will be; and you shall share it.'

'I shall share no man's or woman's life in this world, as you understand sharing. I think I have one friend of my own, but am not sure; and till I *am* sure, I live solitary.'

'But solitude is sadness.'

'Yes; it is sadness. Life, however; has worse than that. Deeper than melancholy, lies heart-break.'

'Lucy, I wonder if anybody will ever comprehend you altogether.'

There is, in lovers, a certain infatuation of egotism; they will have a witness of their happiness, cost that witness what it may. Paulina had forbidden letters, yet Dr. Bretton wrote; she had resolved against correspondence, yet she answered, were it only to chide. She showed me these letters; with something of the spoiled child's wilfulness, and of the heiress's imperiousness, she *made* me read them. As I read Graham's, I scarce wondered at her exaction, and understood her pride: they were fine letters - manly and fond - modest and gallant. Hers must have appeared to him beautiful. They had not been written to show her talents; still less, I think, to express her love. On the contrary, it appeared that she had proposed to herself the task of hiding that feeling, and bridling her lover's ardour. But how could such letters serve such a purpose? Graham was become dear as her life; he drew her like a powerful magnet. For her there was influence unspeakable in all he uttered, wrote, thought, or looked. With this unconfessed confession, her letters glowed; it kindled them, from greeting to adieu.

'I wish papa knew; I *do* wish papa knew!' began now to be her anxious murmur. 'I wish, and yet I fear. I can hardly keep Graham back from telling him. There is nothing I long for more than to have this affair settled - to speak out candidly; and yet I dread the crisis. I know, I am certain, papa will be angry at the first; I fear he will dislike me almost; it will seem to him an untoward business; it will be a surprise, a shock: I can hardly foresee its whole effect on him.'

The fact was - her father, long calm, was beginning to be a little stirred: long blind on one point, an importunate light was beginning to trespass on his eye.

To *her*, he said nothing; but when she was not looking at, or perhaps thinking of him, I saw him gaze and meditate on her.

One evening - Paulina was in her dressing-room, writing, I believe, to Graham; she had left me in the library, reading - M. de Bassompierre came in; he sat down: I was about to withdraw; he requested me to remain - gently, yet in a manner which showed he wished compliance. He had taken his seat near the window, at a distance from me; he opened a desk; he took from it what looked like a memorandum-book; of this book he studied a certain entry for several minutes.

'Miss Snowe,' said he, laying it down, 'do you know my little girl's age?'

'About eighteen, is it not, sir?'

'It seems so. This old pocket-book tells me she was born on the 5th of May, in the year 18 - , eighteen years ago. It is strange; I had lost the just reckoning of her age. I thought of her as twelve - fourteen - an indefinite date; but she seemed a child.'

'She is about eighteen,' I repeated. 'She is grown up; she will be no taller.'

'My little jewel!' said M. de Bassompierre, in a tone which penetrated like some of his daughter's accents.

He sat very thoughtful.

'Sir, don't grieve,' I said; for I knew his feelings, utterly unspoken as they were.

'She is the only pearl I have,' he said; 'and now others will find out that she is pure and of price: they will covet her.'

I made no answer. Graham Bretton had dined with us that day; he had shone both in converse and looks: I know not what pride of bloom embellished his aspect and mellowed his intercourse. Under the stimulus of a high hope, something had unfolded in his whole manner which compelled attention. I think he had purposed on that day to indicate the origin of his endeavours, and the aim of his ambition. M. de Bassompierre had found himself forced, in a manner, to descry the direction and catch the character of his homage. Slow in remarking, he was logical in reasoning: having once seized the thread, it had guided him through a long labyrinth.

‘Where is she?’ he asked.

‘She is up-stairs.’

‘What is she doing?’

‘She is writing.’

‘She writes, does she? Does she receive letters?’

‘None but such as she can show me. And - sir - she - *they* have long wanted to consult you.’

‘Pshaw! They don't think of me - an old father! I am in the way.’

‘Ah, M. de Bassompierre - not so - that can't be! But Paulina must speak for herself: and Dr. Bretton, too, must be his own advocate.’

‘It is a little late. Matters are advanced, it seems.’

‘Sir, till you approve, nothing is done - only they love each other.’

‘Only!’ he echoed.

Invested by fate with the part of confidante and mediator, I was obliged to go on: ‘Hundreds of times has Dr. Bretton been on the point of appealing to you, sir; but, with all his high courage, he fears you mortally.’

‘He may well - he may well fear me. He has touched the best thing I have. Had he but let her alone, she would have remained a child for years yet. So. Are they engaged?’

‘They could not become engaged without your permission.’

‘It is well for you, Miss Snowe, to talk and think with that propriety which always characterizes you; but this matter is a grief to me; my little girl was all I had: I have no more daughters and no son; Bretton might as well have looked elsewhere; there are scores of rich and pretty women who would not, I daresay, dislike him: he has looks, and conduct, and connection. Would nothing serve him but my Polly?’

‘If he had never seen your 'Polly,' others might and would have pleased him - your niece, Miss Fanshawe, for instance.’

‘Ah! I would have given him Ginevra with all my heart; but Polly! - I can't let him have her. No - I can't. He is not her equal,’ he affirmed, rather gruffly. ‘In what particular is he her match? They talk of

fortune! I am not an avaricious or interested man, but the world thinks of these things - and Polly will be rich.'

'Yes, that is known,' said I: 'all Villette knows her as an heiress.'

'Do they talk of my little girl in that light?'

'They do, sir.'

He fell into deep thought. I ventured to say, 'Would you, sir, think any one Paulina's match? Would you prefer any other to Dr. Bretton? Do you think higher rank or more wealth would make much difference in your feelings towards a future son-in-law?'

'You touch me there,' said he.

'Look at the aristocracy of Villette - you would not like them, sir?'

'I should not - never a duc, baron, or vicomte of the lot.'

'I am told many of these persons think about her, sir,' I went on, gaining courage on finding that I met attention rather than repulse. 'Other suitors will come, therefore, if Dr. Bretton is refused. Wherever you go, I suppose, aspirants will not be wanting. Independent of heiress-ship, it appears to me that Paulina charms most of those who see her.'

'Does she? How? My little girl is not thought a beauty.'

'Sir, Miss de Bassompierre is very beautiful.'

'Nonsense! - begging your pardon, Miss Snowe, but I think you are too partial. I like Polly: I like all her ways and all her looks - but then I am her father; and even I never thought about beauty. She is amusing, fairy-like, interesting to me; - you must be mistaken in supposing her handsome?'

'She attracts, sir: she would attract without the advantages of your wealth and position.'

'My wealth and position! Are these any bait to Graham? If I thought so - - '

'Dr. Bretton knows these points perfectly, as you may be sure, M. de Bassompierre, and values them as any gentleman would - as *you* would yourself, under the same circumstances - but they are not his baits. He loves your daughter very much; he feels her finest qualities, and they influence him worthily.'

'What! has my little pet 'fine qualities?''

'Ah, sir! did you observe her that evening when so many men of eminence and learning dined here?'

'I certainly was rather struck and surprised with her manner that day; its womanliness made me smile.'

'And did you see those accomplished Frenchmen gather round her in the drawing-room?'

'I did; but I thought it was by way of relaxation - as one might amuse one's self with a pretty infant.'

'Sir, she demeaned herself with distinction; and I heard the French gentlemen say she was 'petrie d'esprit et de graces.' Dr. Bretton thought the same.'

'She is a good, dear child, that is certain; and I *do* believe she has some character. When I think of it, I was once ill; Polly nursed me; they thought I should die; she, I recollect, grew at once stronger and tenderer as I grew worse in health. And as I recovered, what a sunbeam she was in my sick-room! Yes; she played about my chair as noiselessly and as cheerful as light. And now she is sought in marriage! I don't want to part with her,' said he, and he groaned.

'You have known Dr. and Mrs Bretton so long,' I suggested, 'it would be less like separation to give her to him than to another.'

He reflected rather gloomily.

'True. I have long known Louisa Bretton,' he murmured. 'She and I are indeed old, old friends; a sweet, kind girl she was when she was young. You talk of beauty, Miss Snowe! *she* was handsome, if you will - tall, straight, and blooming - not the mere child or elf my Polly seems to me: at eighteen, Louisa had a carriage and stature fit for a princess. She is a comely and a good woman now. The lad is like her; I have always thought so, and favoured and wished him well. Now he repays me by this robbery! My little treasure used to love her old father dearly and truly. It is all over now, doubtless - I am an incumbrance.'

The door opened - his 'little treasure' came in. She was dressed, so to speak, in evening beauty; that animation which sometimes comes with the close of day, warmed her eye and cheek; a tinge of summer crimson heightened her complexion; her curls fell full and long on her lily neck; her white dress suited the heat of June. Thinking me alone, she had brought in her hand the letter just written - brought it folded but unsealed. I was to read it. When she saw her father, her tripping

step faltered a little, paused a moment - the colour in her cheek flowed rosy over her whole face.

'Polly,' said M. de Bassompierre, in a low voice, with a grave smile, 'do you blush at seeing papa? That is something new.'

'I don't blush - I never *do* blush,' affirmed she, while another eddy from the heart sent up its scarlet. 'But I thought you were in the dining-room, and I wanted Lucy.'

'You thought I was with John Graham Bretton, I suppose? But he has just been called out: he will be back soon, Polly. He can post your letter for you; it will save Matthieu a 'course,' as he calls it.'

'I don't post letters,' said she, rather pettishly.

'What do you do with them, then? - come here and tell me.'

Both her mind and gesture seemed to hesitate a second - to say 'Shall I come?' - but she approached.

'How long is it since you became a letter-writer, Polly? It only seems yesterday when you were at your pot-hooks, labouring away absolutely with both hands at the pen.'

'Papa, they are not letters to send to the post in your letter-bag; they are only notes, which I give now and then into the person's hands, just to satisfy.'

'The person! That means Miss Snowe, I suppose?'

'No, papa - not Lucy.'

'Who then? Perhaps Mrs Bretton?'

'No, papa - not Mrs Bretton.'

'Who, then, my little daughter? Tell papa the truth.'

'Oh, papa!' she cried with earnestness, 'I will - I *will* tell you the truth - all the truth; I am glad to tell you - glad, though I tremble.'

She *did* tremble: growing excitement, kindling feeling, and also gathering courage, shook her.

'I hate to hide my actions from you, papa. I fear you and love you above everything but God. Read the letter; look at the address.'

She laid it on his knee. He took it up and read it through; his hand shaking, his eyes glistening meantime.

He re-folded it, and viewed the writer with a strange, tender, mournful amaze.

'Can *she* write so - the little thing that stood at my knee but yesterday? Can she feel so?'

'Papa, is it wrong? Does it pain you?'

'There is nothing wrong in it, my innocent little Mary; but it pains me.'

'But, papa, listen! You shall not be pained by me. I would give up everything - almost' (correcting herself); 'I would die rather than make you unhappy; that would be too wicked!'

She shuddered.

'Does the letter not please you? Must it not go? Must it be torn? It shall, for your sake, if you order it.'

'I order nothing.'

'Order something, papa; express your wish; only don't hurt, don't grieve Graham. I cannot, *cannot* bear that. I love you, papa; but I love Graham too - because - because - it is impossible to help it.'

'This splendid Graham is a young scamp, Polly - that is my present notion of him: it will surprise you to hear that, for my part, I do not love him one whit. Ah! years ago I saw something in that lad's eye I never quite fathomed - something his mother has not - a depth which warned a man not to wade into that stream too far; now, suddenly, I find myself taken over the crown of the head.'

'Papa, you don't - you have not fallen in; you are safe on the bank; you can do as you please; your power is despotic; you can shut me up in a convent, and break Graham's heart to-morrow, if you choose to be so cruel. Now, autocrat, now czar, will you do this?'

'Off with him to Siberia, red whiskers and all; I say, I don't like him, Polly, and I wonder that you should.'

'Papa,' said she, 'do you know you are very naughty? I never saw you look so disagreeable, so unjust, so almost vindictive before. There is an expression in your face which does not belong to you.'

‘Off with him!’ pursued Mr Home, who certainly did look sorely crossed and annoyed - even a little bitter; ‘but, I suppose, if he went, Polly would pack a bundle and run after him; her heart is fairly won - won, and weaned from her old father.’

‘Papa, I say it is naughty, it is decidedly wrong, to talk in that way. I am *not* weaned from you, and no human being and no mortal influence *can* wean me.’

‘Be married, Polly! Espouse the red whiskers. Cease to be a daughter; go and be a wife!’

‘Red whiskers! I wonder what you mean, papa. You should take care of prejudice. You sometimes say to me that all the Scotch, your countrymen, are the victims of prejudice. It is proved now, I think, when no distinction is to be made between red and deep nut-brown.’

‘Leave the prejudiced old Scotchman; go away.’

She stood looking at him a minute. She wanted to show firmness, superiority to taunts; knowing her father's character, guessing his few foibles, she had expected the sort of scene which was now transpiring; it did not take her by surprise, and she desired to let it pass with dignity, reliant upon reaction. Her dignity stood her in no stead. Suddenly her soul melted in her eyes; she fell on his neck: - ’I won't leave you, papa; I'll never leave you. I won't pain you! I'll never pain you!’ was her cry.

‘My lamb! my treasure!’ murmured the loving though rugged sire. He said no more for the moment; indeed, those two words were hoarse.

The room was now darkening. I heard a movement, a step without. Thinking it might be a servant coming with candles, I gently opened, to prevent intrusion. In the ante-room stood no servant: a tall gentleman was placing his hat on the table, drawing off his gloves slowly - lingering, waiting, it seemed to me. He called me neither by sign nor word; yet his eye said: - ’Lucy, come here.’ And I went.

Over his face a smile flowed, while he looked down on me: no temper, save his own, would have expressed by a smile the sort of agitation which now fevered him.

‘M. de Bassompierre is there - is he not?’ he inquired, pointing to the library.

‘Yes.’

‘He noticed me at dinner? He understood me?’

'Yes, Graham.'

'I am brought up for judgment, then, and so is *she*?'

'Mr Home' (we now and always continued to term him Mr Home at times) 'is talking to his daughter.'

'Ha! These are sharp moments, Lucy!'

He was quite stirred up; his young hand trembled; a vital (I was going to write *mortal*, but such words ill apply to one all living like him) - a vital suspense now held, now hurried, his breath: in all this trouble his smile never faded.

'Is he *very* angry, Lucy?'

'*She* is very faithful, Graham.'

'What will be done unto me?'

'Graham, your star must be fortunate.'

'Must it? Kind prophet! So cheered, I should be a faint heart indeed to quail. I think I find all women faithful, Lucy. I ought to love them, and I do. My mother is good; *she* is divine; and *you* are true as steel. Are you not?'

'Yes, Graham.'

'Then give me thy hand, my little god-sister: it is a friendly little hand to me, and always has been. And now for the great venture. God be with the right. Lucy, say Amen!'

He turned, and waited till I said 'Amen!' - which I did to please him: the old charm, in doing as he bid me, came back. I wished him success; and successful I knew he would be. He was born victor, as some are born vanquished.

'Follow me!' he said; and I followed him into Mr Home's presence.

'Sir,' he asked, 'what is my sentence?'

The father looked at him: the daughter kept her face hid.

'Well, Bretton,' said Mr Home, 'you have given me the usual reward of hospitality. I entertained you; you have taken my best. I was always glad to see you; you were glad to see the one precious thing I had. You

spoke me fair; and, meantime, I will not say you *robbed* me, but I am bereaved, and what I have lost, *you*, it seems, have won.'

'Sir, I cannot repent.'

'Repent! Not you! You triumph, no doubt: John Graham, you descended partly from a Highlander and a chief, and there is a trace of the Celt in all you look, speak, and think. You have his cunning and his charm. The red - (Well then, Polly, the *fair*) hair, the tongue of guile, and brain of wile, are all come down by inheritance.'

'Sir, I *feel* honest enough,' said Graham; and a genuine English blush covered his face with its warm witness of sincerity. 'And yet,' he added, 'I won't deny that in some respects you accuse me justly. In your presence I have always had a thought which I dared not show you. I did truly regard you as the possessor of the most valuable thing the world owns for me. I wished for it: I tried for it. Sir, I ask for it now.'

'John, you ask much.'

'Very much, sir. It must come from your generosity, as a gift; from your justice, as a reward. I can never earn it.'

'Ay! Listen to the Highland tongue!' said Mr Home. 'Look up, Polly! Answer this 'braw wooer;' send him away!' She looked up. She shyly glanced at her eager, handsome suitor. She gazed tenderly on her furrowed sire.

'Papa, I love you both,' said she; 'I can take care of you both. I need not send Graham away - he can live here; he will be no inconvenience,' she alleged with that simplicity of phraseology which at times was wont to make both her father and Graham smile. They smiled now.

'He will be a prodigious inconvenience to me,' still persisted Mr Home. 'I don't want him, Polly, he is too tall; he is in my way. Tell him to march.'

'You will get used to him, papa. He seemed exceedingly tall to me at first - like a tower when I looked up at him; but, on the whole, I would rather not have him otherwise.'

'I object to him altogether, Polly; I can do without a son-in-law. I should never have requested the best man in the land to stand to me in that relation. Dismiss this gentleman.'

'But he has known you so long, papa, and suits you so well.'

'Suits *me*, forsooth! Yes; he has pretended to make my opinions and tastes his own. He has humoured me for good reasons. I think, Polly, you and I will bid him good-by.'

'Till to-morrow only. Shake hands with Graham, papa.'

'No: I think not: I am not friends with him. Don't think to coax me between you.'

'Indeed, indeed, you *are* friends. Graham, stretch out your right hand. Papa, put out yours. Now, let them touch. Papa, don't be stiff; close your fingers; be pliant - there! But that is not a clasp - it is a grasp? Papa, you grasp like a vice. You crush Graham's hand to the bone; you hurt him!'

He must have hurt him; for he wore a massive ring, set round with brilliants, of which the sharp facets cut into Graham's flesh and drew blood: but pain only made Dr. John laugh, as anxiety had made him smile.

'Come with me into my study,' at last said Mr Home to the doctor. They went. Their intercourse was not long, but I suppose it was conclusive. The suitor had to undergo an interrogatory and a scrutiny on many things. Whether Dr. Bretton was at times guileful in look and language or not, there was a sound foundation below. His answers, I understood afterwards, evinced both wisdom and integrity. He had managed his affairs well. He had struggled through entanglements; his fortunes were in the way of retrieval; he proved himself in a position to marry.

Once more the father and lover appeared in the library. M. de Bassompierre shut the door; he pointed to his daughter.

'Take her,' he said. 'Take her, John Bretton: and may God deal with you as you deal with her!'

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Not long after, perhaps a fortnight, I saw three persons, Count de Bassompierre, his daughter, and Dr. Graham Bretton, sitting on one seat, under a low-spreading and umbrageous tree, in the grounds of the palace at Bois l'Etang. They had come thither to enjoy a summer evening: outside the magnificent gates their carriage waited to take them home; the green sweeps of turf spread round them quiet and dim; the palace rose at a distance, white as a crag on Pentelicus; the evening star shone above it; a forest of flowering shrubs embalmed the climate of this spot; the hour was still and sweet; the scene, but for this group, was solitary.

Paulina sat between the two gentlemen: while they conversed, her little hands were busy at some work; I thought at first she was binding a nosegay. No; with the tiny pair of scissors, glittering in her lap, she had severed spoils from each manly head beside her, and was now occupied in plaiting together the grey lock and the golden wave. The plait woven - no silk-thread being at hand to bind it - a tress of her own hair was made to serve that purpose; she tied it like a knot, prisoned it in a locket, and laid it on her heart.

'Now,' said she, 'there is an amulet made, which has virtue to keep you two always friends. You can never quarrel so long as I wear this.'

An amulet was indeed made, a spell framed which rendered enmity impossible. She was become a bond to both, an influence over each, a mutual concord. From them she drew her happiness, and what she borrowed, she, with interest, gave back.

'Is there, indeed, such happiness on earth?' I asked, as I watched the father, the daughter, the future husband, now united - all blessed and blessing.

Yes; it is so. Without any colouring of romance, or any exaggeration of fancy, it is so. Some real lives do - for some certain days or years - actually anticipate the happiness of Heaven; and, I believe, if such perfect happiness is once felt by good people (to the wicked it never comes), its sweet effect is never wholly lost. Whatever trials follow, whatever pains of sickness or shades of death, the glory precedent still shines through, cheering the keen anguish, and tinging the deep cloud.

I will go farther. I *do* believe there are some human beings so born, so reared, so guided from a soft cradle to a calm and late grave, that no excessive suffering penetrates their lot, and no tempestuous blackness overcasts their journey. And often, these are not pampered, selfish beings, but Nature's elect, harmonious and benign; men and women mild with charity, kind agents of God's kind attributes.

Let me not delay the happy truth. Graham Bretton and Paulina de Bassompierre were married, and such an agent did Dr. Bretton prove. He did not with time degenerate; his faults decayed, his virtues ripened; he rose in intellectual refinement, he won in moral profit: all dregs filtered away, the clear wine settled bright and tranquil. Bright, too, was the destiny of his sweet wife. She kept her husband's love, she aided in his progress - of his happiness she was the corner stone.

This pair was blessed indeed, for years brought them, with great prosperity, great goodness: they imparted with open hand, yet wisely. Doubtless they knew crosses, disappointments, difficulties; but these

were well borne. More than once, too, they had to look on Him whose face flesh scarce can see and live: they had to pay their tribute to the King of Terrors. In the fulness of years, M. de Bassompierre was taken: in ripe old age departed Louisa Bretton. Once even there rose a cry in their halls, of Rachel weeping for her children; but others sprang healthy and blooming to replace the lost: Dr. Bretton saw himself live again in a son who inherited his looks and his disposition; he had stately daughters, too, like himself: these children he reared with a suave, yet a firm hand; they grew up according to inheritance and nurture.

In short, I do but speak the truth when I say that these two lives of Graham and Paulina were blessed, like that of Jacob's favoured son, with 'blessings of Heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies under.' It was so, for God saw that it was good.