

THE
ISLAND OF LIFE:

An Allegory.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

"These all confessed that they were pilgrims on the
earth." HEB. xi: 13.

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TO

MY MOTHER,

AS A MARK OF

FILIAL GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED

BY HER SON,

THE AUTHOR.

From darkness here, and dreariness
We ask not full repose;
Only be Thou at hand to bless
Our trial hour of woes.
Is not the pilgrim's toil o'erpaid
By the clear rill and palmy shade?
And see we not, up earth's dark glade,
The gate of heaven unclosed?

KEBLE.

THE ISLAND OF LIFE.

"Soon with thee will all be over;
Soon the voyage will be begun,
Which shall lead thee to discover,
Far away, a land unknown.

"Land that each alone must visit,
But no tidings bring to men;
For no sailor, once departed,
Ever hath returned again."

From the German, by W. H. Furness.

HERE is a vast ocean, boundless, stretching out on every side as far as the eye can reach, with no object upon its surface, and no sound from its waters. Its huge dark waves rise and fall in silence; and the eye, weary with watching its endless motion, searches in vain for anything whereon to rest. One might sail long

and far upon it, and still find nothing but an endless waste of waters. Yet there is somewhere in its midst an island, full of beauty and teeming with life.

If one direct his course to the spot where this island lies, he will see it at first, as he watches carefully the horizon, in the far distance, a mere speck upon the surface of the boundless deep; but as the winds waft him nearer, it grows larger and larger, until when he lands upon its shore, it appears so immense that he is likely to forget the surrounding ocean altogether, and imagine himself in truth upon the main land. Of course, the island is, in reality, no larger than at first; nor does it take up any more

space in the ocean than it did when it could scarcely be seen in the distance. But as children will often judge of the size and importance of things from their nearness to themselves, thinking the household lamp much larger than the star above them; so many who stand upon this island, seem to think its surface so vast, that the ocean is of little account in comparison. This was my own experience. I well knew the real size of the island, and when I saw it from a distance, I wondered that any one should ever think it more than a mere dot in the ocean. But when I came to stand upon its shore, and saw all the strange things I am going to describe, I could hardly

believe that the island was not as vast as the ocean itself.

The island was of an irregular shape, with long promontories stretching far out into the ocean; between these, arms of the sea made far into the land, until, in some places, they almost reached the opposite shore, leaving only a narrow beach between the waters on the opposite sides. There were multitudes of people upon the island, sometimes gathered together in thick, dense crowds, so that one could hardly move without disturbing those around him, sometimes scattered through the fields or wandering about in little bands over parts of the country altogether desolate and uninhabited. But eve-

rywhere alike they were all moving continually in the same direction, from one side to the other.

On the side from which they started fresh crowds were constantly landing from the ocean, so that the numbers instead of failing, seemed rather to increase. Their steps at the beginning of their journey were feeble, like those of little children, and they could not get on without help. They soon grew strong enough to take care of themselves; and yet for a long while they evidently fared better who were willing to be guided by those farther advanced upon the journey.

What could become of all these people seemed wonderful. If when they reached the farther side, they had

turned back, the empty parts of the island would have been quickly filled up, and no room left for the multitudes who were pressing forward. But as it was, not one turned back, or even stopped for so much as a moment in his journey. All went straight and rapidly on in the same direction, and, sooner or later, they all came to the water, and could go no further. Some went but a little way, and had hardly time to leave one shore before they were stopped by the water on the other; a few travelled on to the very end of the longest promontories; but the mass of the people found themselves upon the beach which ended their journey before they had gone half the length of the island.

The bays, deeply indenting the shore, were often extremely narrow, and the many little creeks winding through the land were more than half hidden by their banks; and all so irregularly placed that it was not easy, when one first started, to form any notion of the distance he might have to travel; and this uncertainty continued to the last, so that the conjectures even of those already well advanced on their journey, in regard to the distance still before them, were of little value, and often proved to be altogether wrong.

There was a tradition among the people that the island had once been much broader, so that it took at least ten times as long to travel from shore

to shore ; but in a terrible storm the waves rose, and after sweeping almost everybody away, destroyed a great part of the island itself. Thus, although some parts were still called broad in comparison with others which were very narrow ; yet the greatest breadth was not much, and the people all seemed to reach the farther side sooner than they expected.

Close to the shore there was a vessel anchored, ready for each person to embark at the end of his journey. This vessel did not in itself look inviting, and there was a certain sternness in the expression of the captain which made people at first shrink from going on board. It was, however,

widely known that the voyage to be taken in it would occupy but a short time ; and although no one liked the vessel itself, yet their feelings in regard to it depended chiefly upon their expectations of the land whither it would bear them.

Some there were who rejoiced greatly as they went on board ; others were so well satisfied with the island that they would gladly have staid much longer there ; and there were many who seemed to be frightened at the very sight of the ship which was to bear them away. It was a singular thing that those who were most tired with their journey, and the least happy in their life upon the island, were often the most unwilling to set sail upon

that wide, dark sea ; while to those who had been more contented, and were quite willing to prolong their journey, it seemed to have nothing repulsive. Indeed the very certainty of embarking, sooner or later, seemed to be their chief source of contentment and happiness.

The masts of the vessel were high, and their shadow, where the shore was low, fell far in upon the land. None who passed under this shadow ever left it again. It seemed to have some strange power over the travellers ; for each one, as it fell upon him, turned, though perchance unconsciously, to follow its course until he stood upon the ship itself, and was borne away over the ocean. Warning was thus

given of the time of embarking, especially to those who happened to be travelling at the time upon low ground.

But the shadow of the mast was often confused and lost in the shadows of the trees, and even on the beach, and in the open field, it easily escaped notice. It fell upon many, too, while they were travelling over high ground, where it reached but a little way ; and sometimes the ship lay directly at the foot of a precipice, and the shadow of her masts fell only upon the steep side of the cliff, so that whoever came under it was taken aboard in a moment, without the slightest warning.

Here and there a person might be seen who had time to make some

preparation for the voyage after the shadow had fallen upon him ; but for the most part, the travellers were obliged to go on board just as they were, in the midst of their journey, and thinking perhaps that the ship was a long way off. With preparation or without, as soon as the shadow fell upon them, they could not leave it, neither could they stand still. They walked straight on in the path of the shadow until they stood upon the deck and were borne quickly away.

Yet to a few, a special warning was given in another way. Beyond the reach of the shadow, oftentimes far out of sight of the ship itself, a messenger was sent with the summons to prepare to embark. His step was noiseless,



and his form was seldom seen, save by those to whom he was sent. No sound fell from his lips; but such as felt his touch, knew that ere long the dark shadow must fall across their pathway, for the time of their embarking was at hand. The messenger went, as he came, unseen and unheard; yet at times a strange consciousness of his presence was felt by those around, filling them with awe, and awe being the beginning of wisdom, they were wiser.

Nothing could be seen of the land to which the people sailed. The ocean seemed boundless, and the eye was strained in vain to catch so much as the outline of a shore beyond.

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Nothing could be seen of the land to which the people sailed. The ocean seemed boundless, and the eye was strained in vain to catch so much as the outline of a shore beyond.

Far off over the waters one part of the horizon looked bright and beautiful; while another was very dark, except as it was lighted up from time to time by terrible flashes of lightning, making it look only more gloomy than before.

All sailed towards one or other of these points. They were borne so quickly out of sight that it could not always be told on the island which course was taken. At the same time it was well known that the course, once taken, was never changed. There were said to be currents in the ocean between the two courses, so violent that it was impossible for a ship to pass them.

Although the lands beyond could

not be seen, it was generally understood what sort of countries they were. In some parts of the island, it is true, the notions of the people about them were very vague and indistinct. They knew the country could not be pleasant where the clouds were always so dark, and the lightning so fearful; and they thought that skies so bright as those in the distance, must look down on some happy land.

But many of the people had learnt more than this. The land in the direction of the bright light they knew to be exceedingly beautiful and pleasant. There was a golden city there, where every one was as happy as his heart could wish. None who entered it were ever in sorrow, or

pain, or trouble any more. There the wail of the infant was hushed, the tears were wiped away from all eyes, and the furrows of care blotted out from every brow. For there the wicked ceased from troubling and the weary were at rest. Through the midst of the city flowed a beautiful river, and delightful trees grew along its banks, with leaves always green, and delicious fruits ever ripening afresh; and they who dwelt there, drank of its water and were never thirsty, and ate of these fruits and were never hungry. They were never tired, and had no need of sleep. There was no night there; for a more beautiful light than the sun and the moon shone always, and those on whom it shone seemed changed so

greatly that one would hardly have known them; for they became bright and glorious like the light, and they all rejoiced to know that their glory and their happiness would never end.

As for the other land, it was a fearful place. Instead of there being no sorrow, there was no happiness there, no peace, no joy, no hope. It was dark, and gloomy, and terrible exceedingly, so that even to think upon it made one shudder. Strange sights and sounds of agony were there, and all who ever landed upon that shore would have given their lives to get away; but this was impossible, for the ship would bear none back to the island again; between this and the land of joy the stormy sea was utter-

ly impassable, and in all the vast compass of that immeasurable ocean, there was no other shore.

Some of the people on the little island thought a great deal about these countries, and were always glad to be upon the high land where they could tell by the sky, the direction in which they lay. Many, however, although they knew they must soon sail away to one or the other, thought little about them; and as they walked along, fixed their eyes steadily upon the ground, as if on purpose to shut out all sight of the surrounding ocean. When thoughts of the distant lands did arise in their minds, they forgot as quickly as possible the land of gloom, and seemed to remem-

ber only the bright and happy shore, and whenever they talked with their fellow-travellers, about these things, they always dwelt upon the land of joy, for they said it made them sad and dispirited to think or speak of the other. They knew that large numbers sailed the other way; yet for the most part, each one seemed to think, strangely enough, that he would himself, by some means or other, reach that glorious country, and have his own home in its happy city forever.

The King of the better land had, from time to time, commanded certain messengers to publish throughout the island the knowledge of what lay beyond the ocean. The people how-

ever, gave little heed to these declarations, and therefore the king, who loved them very much, and wished to bring them all to live with Himself in His own happy home, at one time sent His own Son among them. He came and walked with the people entirely across the island, from one shore to the other, instructing them all the way; and even after He had sailed across the ocean, He returned again for a little while to make sure all that He had said before. When at last he went away, He left persons to write down His words and teach them to others, they again to others still who came after them, so that they should never be forgotten. His words had thus become well known to a large part of

the people; for many had heard those who were constantly employed in teaching them, many had read the little book in which they were written, and others still had copies of it which they meant to read before they should come to the end of their journey. In this book the lands out of sight over the ocean were described, not fully and exactly, but plainly enough to show what sort of countries they were. Language seemed insufficient to express fully the wretchedness of the land of woe, or the glory and happiness of the country where the King dwelt. The reasons why some people were borne by the ship in one direction, and others in the other, were given very clearly;

all were told what they must do, if they wished to be carried to the land of peace and joy, whither the King's Son had gone before.

Near the shore where the islanders began their journey, there was a beautiful pool of fresh water, clear as crystal, and over it hovered always a Dove of lovely plumage. The King's Son had established a law that all who wished to be carried to the happy country where He lived, should, in the first place, be bathed in this pool. But as the people were at first too helpless to follow this direction for themselves, and he was too kind to let them suffer always for the neglect of others, he allowed those who were appointed to teach His will, to car-

ry water from this pool to various parts of the island, that if any had been neglected at the beginning, they might still be washed with it if they wished. This water produced no certain, visible effect, and some even ventured to doubt its usefulness. The numbers on whom it was poured were so immense, that it was quite impossible for any person to watch the course of every one of them, or even of a sufficient number to tell whether they fared better in their journey than others. Yet the water always left a mark which the king could see; and His Son called those who bore it, His own people; and the beautiful Dove that hovered over the water, seemed to fly as a Guide about them, and

though unseen, He kept always near, unless they were foolish enough of their own choice to drive him away.

There was a little plant growing in every part of the island, whose leaves any one who chose, might pick. It was a strange kind of plant; for if its leaves were warmed in the bosom long and well, they became very fragrant and would mount high in the air, and be borne by the winds quickly across the sea to the King's throne, carrying Him tidings of how the travellers fared in their journey, and telling Him all the wishes of the heart from which they came. The King's Son treasured up these leaves, and spread them out before His Father. Those who sent them found afterwards beautiful fruits

in their path; and when they had eaten, they had new strength and vigor to journey on, doing in all things as the King had ordered. Those who did not send up any of these leaves, or but few of them, were often heard complaining that they did not understand the words which the King's Son had spoken. Some of His directions were too plain to be mistaken by any one; but even these they did not keep. It was plain, when their journey was ended, that such persons had not done as the King commanded; and the ship, having taken them on board, was sure to steer where the sky was darkest.

The island was so formed with high hills, and deep valleys, and openings

through the woods, that the travellers were often almost forced to look out upon the ocean, and think of the lands beyond. The King, too, wishing if it were possible that all might come and dwell with Him in His own bright and glorious city, had provided many helps for those who sought to understand the words of His Son, and to do as he had told them. There was nothing else, however, of so much use as the fragrant leaves. They gave the people a way of talking with the King in that unseen and far off land and of getting every thing they wanted ready against the time when they were to embark. The very winds seemed to know those who had sent many of them, and to fill out the sails

of their ship to the full. The stern Captain almost smiled as he took them on board, and steered right on for that happy land whither their leaves had gone before.

CHAPTER II.

How full of dread, how full of hope, loometh inevitable death:

Of dread; for all have sinned: of hope; for one hath saved.

The dread is drowned in joy, the hope is filled with immortality!

—Pass along, pilgrim of life, go to thy grave unfearing,
The terrors are but shadows now that haunt the vale
of death.

Tupper.

AS I looked earnestly at these things, the multitude became confusing, and I determined to take my stand at some point on the shore of the Island where I could see the people as they came down to the beach to embark. I first went out to the end of one of the longest promontories; for as the people liked to linger on the island, I thought I should there see most of them. I

waited a long time, without seeing any one. I began to think no one ever travelled so far as this. At last, just as I was about to go away, I saw two old men, whose heads were white as snow, and their steps feeble with age, slowly and painfully toiling along. A little distance behind them was a woman, quite blind, and almost deaf, whose enjoyment of the pleasures of the journey had evidently long since come to an end. I watched these persons carefully. They had known for some time that they must be near the end of their journey; for the ocean was in full view on both sides, and, as they went on, the point grew narrower and narrower, and they could sometimes see plainly the ship an-

chored by its side. I saw them, as one by one, they passed under the shadow of its masts. All were moved, but each one in a different way from the others. One of the old men, though he seemed no less travel-worn and weary than his companions, yet was extremely uneasy at the thought of sailing away from the island. When he saw the vessel so near and knew that its shadow must soon fall upon him, he showed great anxiety to prolong his journey. He was suffered to go on almost to the last rock that stretched boldly out into the ocean. But this lengthening of his path gave him no pleasure. He felt, indeed, a certain pride in standing where so few had ever stood before him; but this

was embittered by the thought that he himself could remain there but so short a time. His relish for travelling was gone, and it was now a weary labor to go on still, slowly and painfully one step after another. His arms were full of flowers he had gathered by the way, and though they were faded now, and their fragrance all gone; yet he still clung to them, and they made a heavy burden for him to bear. He had many other things, too, — curious stones, and carved wood, and shining sand, which he had collected in the course of his long journey. These he persisted in still dragging along, though he knew they could not be taken aboard the ship, and must therefore be abandoned on the shore

just before him. He seemed to be an unhappy man, and I wondered he should care to keep on travelling so long. But as often as his eye rested on the ship, now in plain sight, he turned away with a shudder. Thus he journeyed on, and although not until he had reached the utmost bound of this long promontory, did the dark shadow of the ship fall upon him; yet even then, the warning was unwelcome, and seemed almost unexpected. He struggled hard to avoid going on board the ship; and just as his foot was touching the deck, when he found that all the burdens he had toiled under so long and loved so much were lost, he stretched back his hand to the shore, and hastily pluck-

ing a leaf, he tried to send it upwards. It was too late. He was hardly able to reach the leaf at all; and when, with much difficulty, he had succeeded in plucking it, he had so little time to warm it in his bosom, that it only floated about uncertainly in the air awhile, and then sunk down and was swallowed up in the waves. The captain's look, as he came on board, was very stern and forbidding; and the ship was soon lost to sight in the gloom. As I looked after her, straining the eye in vain to catch some glimpse of her sails through the darkness, a flash of lightning threw a brilliant light over her for a moment, and I saw she had on her signal flag these words, "Thou hast had thy good things in

this life; but now" —. There was not time to read more; but I knew the other words must be something very dreadful. Never shall I forget my last look at that ship. The dark clouds above, and the sullen sea beneath seemed to mingle together in one mass of intense darkness. The foaming crests of the waves gleamed terribly in the lightning's lurid glare, and the ship shot on with fearful speed before the gale. When I thought of the old man, alone upon her deck, without a home, without a friend upon that wide, unknown sea, his doom seemed already so terrible that I cared not to know what new anguish might await him in the land to which he sailed.

When the other aged man, his companion on the island, saw the ocean all around, and knew that he could not travel on much longer, his feelings were of quite another kind. As he grew more and more convinced that he was near the place of embarking, his whole face became radiant with joy. He had journeyed far enough. The path had become difficult to his feeble steps. And while he seemed willing to travel on quite to the end, he was glad to find the end so near. The fragrance of the leaves he was continually sending up, filled the air all around. He, too, had plucked the flowers along the road; but not having cared to treasure them up, like his companion, they were not now in his

way. The few he still carried had not faded, and their freshness and beauty seemed to give him pleasure, though they occupied but little of his thoughts. He had some bruises, received in the early part of his journey, when he had at times, neglected to follow the king's instructions. Sometimes they were painful, and made it more difficult for him to travel; but he was too earnest and intent on what was before him to allow any such pain or stiffness to hinder him in what he was doing. His journey was soon over. I thought I could observe a slight trembling of his frame when he first saw that the shadow of the ship was actually upon him; but it was only momentary. He had been much

strengthened by the fruits he had found along his way, where he had sent up the fragrant leaves; and the Dove which hovered over the pool of chrystal water in which he had been bathed, though he had sometimes driven Him away in the early part of his journey, was now near as a Comforter to cheer and refresh him. The Captain of the ship too, seemed to smile on him, and at last he rejoiced as he sailed swiftly away with the signal floating over him, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

When they were gone, the old woman who followed, came tottering down to the shore. She had travelled through a part of the island where the King's instructions had never been

carried, and she had not been taught how to use the fragrant leaves growing along her way. Still, she had heard some rumor about the far off lands and the King who reigned there. There were certain things which she knew He must wish her to do, and she had tried to do them. In her ignorance, she had done many things also which He had strictly forbidden; but she was persuaded, I hardly knew why, that the fragrant leaves would do her good if she plucked and warmed them well and gave them to the winds. This she had done; but she did not certainly know what had become of them, and she had only a vague and indistinct idea of the countries that lay beyond the ocean. She

was little moved when the shadow fell upon her, and turned to follow its course, without dread indeed, but with no alacrity. She was willing to have her journey on the island at an end; but whither she was now going, she knew not. With an uncertain step she went on board; and as I looked upon her, I wished earnestly she could have had more knowledge, for I was satisfied it would have been better for her. I wondered that the people who had the King's instructions and seemed to prize them so much, should not take more pains to send them to the destitute parts of the island. I was the more surprised at this when I remembered that the King's Son had told them to do this, and had even

asked it as a mark of their love for Himself. This was one of the many things in the island which I could not understand. Yet so it was, and the poor woman was plainly the sufferer for it. Still, I thought she sailed towards the bright sky; but a mist hung round the ship, and made every thing uncertain.

CHAPTER III.

It died ere its expanding soul
Had ever burnt with wrong desires,
Had ever spurned at heaven's control,
Or ever quenched its sacred fires.

WAITED a long time, but saw no more travellers on this promontory. Satisfied at last that few ever journeyed so far, I wandered along the shore until I came to a deep cove, which I followed up to its head, where it almost broke through into the sea on the other side. Here, where the beach between the two parts of the ocean was narrowest, great numbers were continually setting sail. In no other part of the island was there such simple, unclouded happiness as here. The young travellers had too

lately begun their journey to know much of its weariness and difficulty. The very pressure of their feet upon the ground seemed to give them joy. If at any time trouble did come upon them for a moment, it passed away like a summer cloud, leaving no shadow in the glad sunshine that followed. Yet here they did not seem to dread the water as in other parts of the island; but sailed away as willingly as they would have stayed, almost unconscious of what was happening. The King's Son had loved this part of the island much, and had more than once declared that those who journeyed here were peculiarly fitted to dwell with Him in His own glorious home. All the people in the island seemed to re-

member with peculiar pleasure the early part of their journey, and to take a warm interest in those who were just beginning to follow them. When, therefore, they sailed away so soon, their friends were grieved and sad. Sometimes they even murmured loudly at parting from them almost before they had begun their journey. But could these friends themselves have sailed across the ocean, and have seen the unutterable joy which the King's Son had there stored up for those whom He loved, I thought they would have almost urged them to embark; and have rejoiced to see them sail away before they had felt the weariness of their journey, or had learned to grieve the King by

disobeying His instructions. As they set sail, sweet music floated in the air above them, guarding their ship, and guiding it safely through the waves. On its flag were these words, in letters beautiful as the sun, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." And so bright was the light that shone over them that I thought I even caught a glimpse of them as they landed upon the shore of the happy land. There they were clothed in robes of the purest white, golden harps were put into their hands, and, singing a new song of sweeter melody than had ever been heard upon the island shore, they were brought near to the King's Son, joyously following Him whithersoever He went.

Turning away from this beautiful scene, I walked along the shore, the land becoming broader at every step, until I came to a stream winding far into the land. Its banks were high and steep, quite hiding the stream from view until one came close upon it. As I followed its course inland, I began to muse on the uncertainty travellers must feel about the length of their journey. Here, at a little distance, there seemed nothing to interrupt it. The fields were smooth and fair on either side, and the shores of the ocean were far away. Yet where I was standing, the dark ship could be plainly seen floating along the stream, while the shadow of its masts fell darkly and heavily upon

the bank. Surely it were wise, thought I, for travellers to be always ready to embark even at a moment's notice.

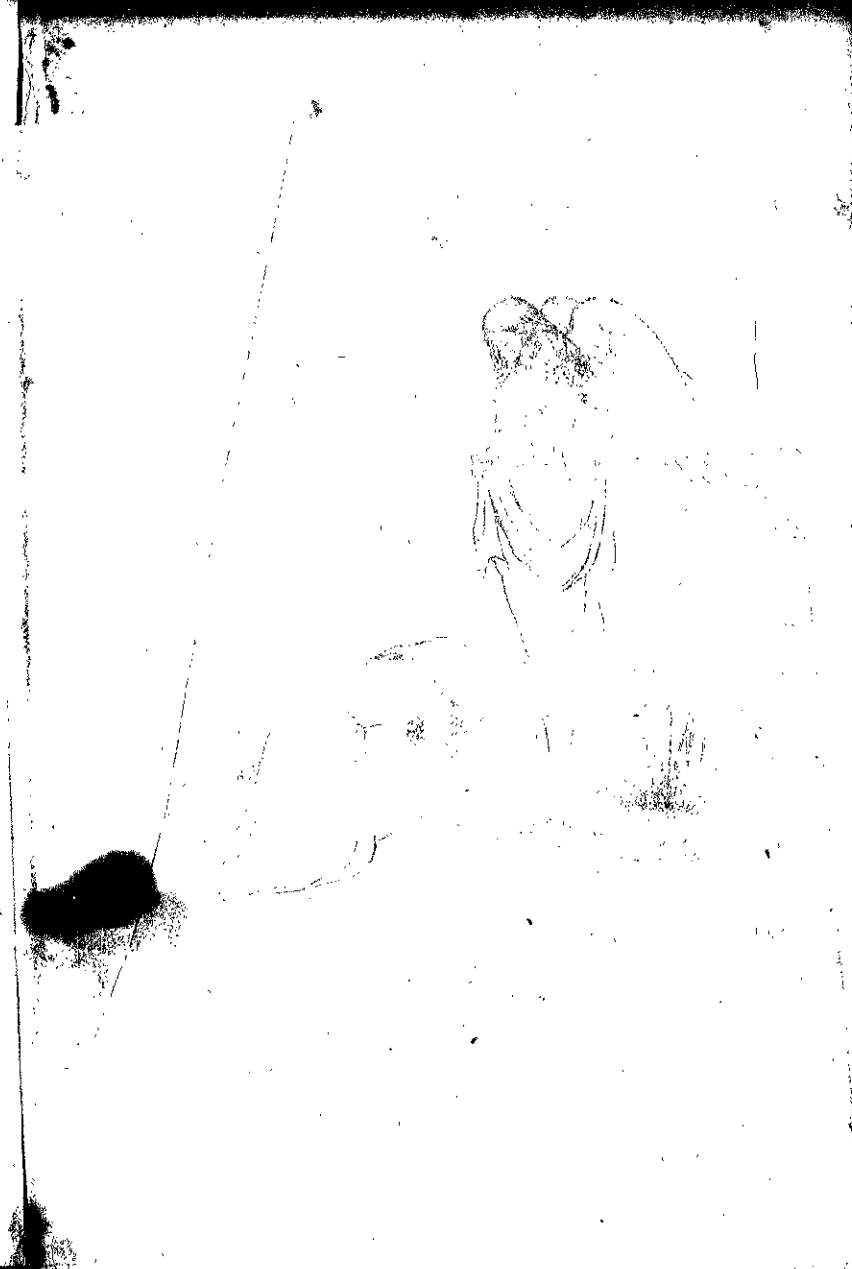
In the midst of these thoughts I looked up suddenly and saw upon the bank a beautiful woman leaning upon the arm of a strong man. They were both young, and had just taken into their arms a lovely little infant on which they were looking with affection so intense that they did not see the stream before them. The child was quite helpless, and they had taken care to see it bathed in the pool of chrystal water, before it should be exposed to the dangers that abounded in the island. It looked so beautiful and bright when it was

taken out of the water, with the mark of the King's Son upon it, that their hearts rejoiced, and they plucked the leaves by the wayside continually, and warmed them so well in their bosoms that they darted away in the air like birds swift of wing, towards the dwelling place of the King. This was a pleasant family to look upon, and my heart was glad when I saw how earnestly they studied the instructions given to them, and how constantly they sent up the fragrant leaves which the King loved. But as I watched them, they seemed to change. With the strong young man at her side, and the lovely child in her arms, the mother seemed too happy in the island to care so much about the far

off country where the King dwelt with His Son. Her heart became more and more bound up in the things around her, until she could scarce think of any thing besides, and when she plucked the leaves, she did not warm them all with the same care as before, and thus many fell at once to the ground, while others floated about uncertainly in the air. Those only which she gathered for the sake of her husband and her child seemed to mount up to the sky as once they all had done. She no longer sought to climb the hills and look out towards the bright sky where lay the land she had hoped to call her home; but rather, too well satisfied with the country through which she journeyed,

she chose as much as possible the valleys and thick groves where the ocean was quite shut out from her sight. I was much grieved at this change, when suddenly, I saw, she started and grew very pale. She had not till then observed the stream, on the bank of which they were walking, and where the dark ship was already setting its sails. The ship itself was hidden from her view by the bank; but the shadow of its masts fell directly upon the form of her beautiful child. It was the lightest and faintest shadow of the highest mast; but it could not be mistaken. In vain the mother strove to screen her child from the unwelcome shadow. In vain she tried to turn aside, and flee with it al-

together from the bank. This could not be. The shadow fell but a little way on this high ground, and they were already very near the ship. Soon the messenger came from the ship and bore the child from her arms. As it went on board it turned to its mother with a smile sweet and full of joy that seemed to say (for it was not old enough to speak in words) "Dear Mother, I am going home to that beautiful land, and the lovely Dove is near me, and bright spirits are all around me,—look, Mother, see them waiting to guard me on the voyage, and to take me to live with the King's Son who loves us all so much." But the Mother did not see. Her child was gone; the idol of her



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heart was taken from her. She seemed for the moment, almost to forget the strong young man at her side, though his head was bowed in sorrow like her own. Gladly would she have sailed away in the vessel with her child; but its shadow, though it fell very near, did not quite reach her. Perhaps it was better for her that it was so; for then no leaves sent by her were floating on to the happy land, and had she set sail, it is not easy to say how the stern Captain of the vessel would have steered. After this, for a time, she was more careful. I saw that her book was oftener open, and the leaves she plucked rose higher and quicker in the air, and shed around a sweeter fragrance.

The young man, her companion in her journey through the island, felt the loss of the child almost as keenly as its mother. When he first saw the dark shadow upon it, he gathered many of the fragrant leaves and warmed them well in his bosom. He begged earnestly that his child, his only child, might not be taken thus early away. But when it was gone, though he sorrowed, he sorrowed in a different way from its mother. His eye was lit up with an almost exulting hope even in its utmost sadness. He knew that his child had sailed to the land where the sky was brightest, and he rejoiced to think of its happiness there. And as he travelled on, I heard him often repeating to himself these words of comfort "I shall go to him."

After a time the young woman seemed in a great measure to forget her sorrow. There were moments when thoughts of the lost one came over her, and she would dream that she could hear its little voice calling to her from the happy land to come and live with it there. But such thoughts, as time wore on, came more and more seldom. Little by little she became again engrossed with things around her, and forgetful of the ocean and the lands beyond. Presently she ceased to warm the leaves in her bosom at all. She still plucked them indeed, and she still read the King's instructions; but there was much in them she did not understand, and she hardly tried to follow them at all.

She was now walking upon very low ground, which she liked the better because the ocean was altogether shut out of sight. But even in these secluded valleys the winding streams still bore the dark ship along. Its shadow here fell far over the land, and soon the young man passed under it. At first he was hardly conscious that it was upon him; and the ship was still at too great a distance to attract his attention. Slowly, however, he drew nearer. Soon he began to feel the chill of the dark shadow, and saw that the ship was at hand for him to embark. At first he trembled and shrank back. He was sad, too, at the thought of leaving his companion to travel on alone. But as he drew

nearer to the ship, and heard the sound of her lifting anchor, his eye lighted up, and turning to the woman he told her to sorrow not as one without hope, for he was persuaded they should meet again in the happy land beyond the sea. He thought and spoke much of the King's Son, and seemed to long to see him face to face. Thus he was borne away, and the fragrance of the many leaves he had sent before, seemed to hang about and linger behind him, showing plainly enough the way in which he had sailed.

When he had gone, the woman, who had so long walked by his side, seemed crushed with sorrow. Her child, and the beloved companion of her jour-

ney, one after the other, had been taken from her. She stood for a time, lost in speechless sorrow. Even the power of thought seemed to be gone. At last, in an agony of grief, she plucked a leaf and warmed it long and well in her bosom. It sped quickly upward, and then another and another followed. I saw that bright spirits, whom she could not see, flew swiftly from the happy land, whither her child and her husband had gone, and came near to comfort and watch over her. As often as I saw her afterwards, she was walking over the tops of the hills, and high places, from which she could look out upon the bright sky towards the country of the King. When, at

times, she was obliged to go down into the valleys, or to pass through the thick woods, she was reminded of the dangerous carelessness into which she had fallen before, and became still more anxious to keep within sight of the ocean. She picked the fragrant leaves too, and sent them upwards oftener than ever before, and studied much the instructions of the King. One part of them she read over and over again. It was that part where the young man had found the words he repeated so often when their child sailed away,—“I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

Long was she left to journey on, desolate and alone. I did not see her when she embarked; but I was told

that the signal flag above her bore this inscription, "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted ; for before I was afflicted, I went astray." They told me, too, that when she reached the golden city in the far off land, she was clothed in a white robe, and a palm was put in her hand having written on it, "These are they which came out of great tribulation." What I heard made me think that, even in that glorious land where all are happy, there was some higher happiness still which it was given her to enjoy.

CHAPTER IV.

Quit now, full of heart and comfort,
These Azores ; they are of earth :
Where the rosy clouds are parting,
There the blessed isles loom forth.

From the German by W. H. Furness.



NCE more I followed the windings of the shore, until I entered another beautiful cove, not so deep, indeed, as the one I had seen before ; but yet encroaching far enough on the land to make the island, across from its head, quite narrow. The country was here exceedingly beautiful. There was a wood of fine old forest trees, whose branches met overhead, shutting out the scorching heat of noon, and forming a shelter too, against the cold, bleak winds which swept over the

more exposed points of the island. The sun shone through their leaves in softened rays, covering the ground with beautiful lights and shadows, ever varying and changing their forms as some gentle breeze moved the branches above. Underneath was a smooth greensward where troops of laughing children were playing and gathering the bright flowers that grew all around in endless variety. When I looked closely, it is true, I saw stones scattered here and there upon the ground, against which the children sometimes hurt their feet, and many of the flowers grew among thorns which pricked and tore their hands when they were too eager in gathering these beautiful but perisha-

ble treasures. Still this was a happy place. The joyousness of the travellers did not, perhaps, flow in quite such an uninterrupted stream here as in the still deeper cove which I had seen before; but it seemed to be more free, and of a more intelligent kind. Often the children could hardly contain their gladness, and would climb the trees, and leap, and roam about, as if they could never sufficiently show how happy they were. There were openings here and there through the trees, so that the children could sometimes look out on the ocean, if they chose; but many of them had never seen any one set sail upon it, and had only heard from others about the gloomy looking ship

which was one day to bear them all away. Yet they knew almost as much about the lands beyond the ocean as many who had journeyed farther; and some of them were very fond of thinking how pleasant that land must be where the sky was so beautiful and bright. Almost all the children had copies of the King's instructions, and they understood a great deal of what was written there. I was glad to see this; for I knew it was comparatively easy to learn here to do the King's will, while if His instructions were neglected now, it grew harder and harder to keep them as the people travelled farther over the island.

I saw two little children in this

wood, going along hand in hand, and so like each other that I knew at once they were brother and sister. They were playing about, full of happiness and glee. The little girl particularly, loved the flowers and picked many of them, and rejoiced in the beautiful wood through which they were travelling. She often thought too, of the far off lands beyond the sea, and read much in the King's instructions, and seemed to love his son who had taken so much pains to teach her what to do in order that she might go to live with Him when the time should come for her to sail away. She picked the fragrant leaves very often, and seldom forgot to put them in her bosom and warm them well. She tried to per-

suade her brother to do so too, telling him how happy it made her, and might make him, if he choose. "Besides," she said, "it is the wish of the King's son, and you know, dear brother, how much he loves us, and wishes to have us happy with Himself in His own bright country, after we have finished our journey in the island." He was ashamed to refuse to pluck the leaves at all, when she pleaded so earnestly with him; but he was so careless in warming them that his leaves often fell to the ground, while his sister's rose high above the tops of the trees, shedding a sweet fragrance all around. He was vexed at this, and although his sister told him that none would mount higher than his, if he would

but be patient and persevere; yet, instead of learning to warm the leaves in his bosom, he only picked fewer and fewer of them, and soon began to dislike to have anything to do with them at all.

A little way before them there was a tree, bending down with fruit, large and of bright colors, and fully ripe. As soon as they saw it, they both sprang eagerly forward to gather it. They thought only of their prize, and were full of joy at finding it; but I was grieved when I saw them eating, for I knew the King's instructions forbade so much as the touching of this fruit. I turned away for a moment, and when I looked again, I saw that the little girl, remembering what the

King had said, had thrown it all away and was very sorry for what she had done. She picked many fragrant leaves and sent them up, and I heard her say she was resolved never to eat of this fruit again. But her brother only laughed and said that such delicious fruit, and so ripe, could do no harm, he was sure. To please his sister, he eat no more of it then ; but he was not at all sorry he had tasted it, and watched for an opportunity when unobserved, he might pluck and eat of it again.

Soon after this they came to a place in the wood where the smooth ground was so narrow that only two could walk in it at once. On either side the ground was stony and covered with

thorn bushes, making it painful and difficult for those who were obliged to walk there. Just as they were entering this part of the wood, two little girls came up with them. None of them could wait, and yet all could not walk together on the smooth ground. The boy, who was quite stout enough to have made his way along at the side, thrust himself boldly into the middle of it. His sister quietly stepped out into the rough ground herself to make it as easy to their companions as possible. It was a little matter : for the rough ground did not last long ; but I knew one of the chief rules in the instructions of the King was to do to others as we would have them do to us, and I thought He would

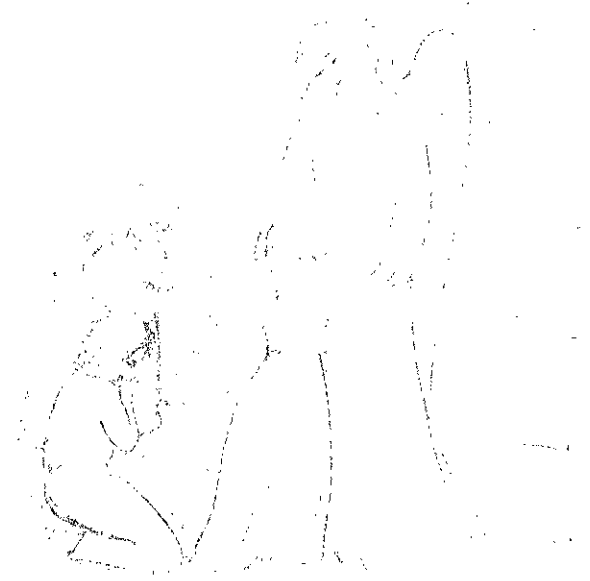
like the conduct of the little girl better than that of her brother, and would remember it when they came to sail away to the far off lands. Thus they travelled on for some distance. The sister grew more and more careful to obey the instructions of the King, and felt a deeper and deeper sorrow, whenever she was led in any way to transgress them. She took an increasing pleasure too, in thinking of the happy land beyond the sea; and, much as she loved the place where she was travelling, she seemed more intent on reaching at last that better land, than on all things else. So earnest was she in her preparation for the time of embarking, that I thought she must have had already felt the touch



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of the unseen messenger. All at once the shadow of the dark ship fell upon her, and she was taken on board even from the midst of that pleasant wood. All the children around saw her go, and her brother cried bitterly when she was taken from him. But she was happier than they all, far happier than she had been herself until now; for she was to get on to that golden city where there were no forbidden things, and where she could be always near the King's son who had been so kind to her, and never again be tempted to do any thing that he did not wish.

When I saw what became of her brother, I was glad she had sailed away so soon; for if she had stayed



of the unseen messenger. All at once the shadow of the dark ship fell upon her, and she was taken on board even from the midst of that pleasant wood. All the children around saw her go, and her brother cried bitterly when she was taken from him. But she was happier than they all, far happier than she had been herself until now; for she sailed right on to that golden city where there were no forbidden fruits, and where she could be always near the King's son who had been so kind to her, and never again be tempted to do any thing that he did not wish.

When I saw what became of her brother, I was glad she had sailed away so soon; for if she had stayed

to see it, it would have grieved her to the heart. In a little while his tears for his sister were dried, and a troop of boys coming along, full of noise and laughter, he joined them and travelled on in their company. They had lost or forgotten the instructions of the King, or at least, paid no attention to them, and seemed to care for little but their own pleasure. The fragrant leaves they never plucked, and some of them even trampled upon the plants on which they grew. I did not care to watch this troop; but I saw something of them while following the course of the little girl's brother. I was much interested in him for her sake. The boys went on in the same careless way until

they had passed quite through the pleasant wood and had come out upon the open plain. There they separated into two companies. One of these still went on as carelessly as before, full of noisy mirth, looking only for fruits and flowers to enjoy as they went along. As they drew near the farther side of the island, these became more and more scarce. Yet there was no lack even there of certain kinds of fruits and flowers which the King's Son had spoken of as pleasant and good; but for these they had no relish or taste. As they advanced in their journey the kinds they loved had either ceased to grow, or were over-ripe, decayed, and nauseous. They became miserably un-

happy, and one of them, in his weariness of the island and disgust with travelling, even sprang on board the ship before its shadow had fallen upon him, and sailed away to the dark sky while the lightning flashed around him fearfully.

The other company, after the separation, changed their ways. They laid aside their light and careless air, and began to be very busy and earnest in gathering fruits and flowers of such kinds as would keep longest, and stored them away in bundles which they carried with them. They reminded me of the old man I had seen on the long promontory, although as they were still in the midst of the island, the uselessness of their occupation did

not at first strike me so strongly. The little girl's brother was one of this company. He made a bundle so large that it was very heavy to carry ; but the instructions of the King were not in it. I saw him when the dark shadow first fell upon him. He was exceedingly frightened, and shrieked, and called on his almost forgotten sister to save him. Earnestly he now wished he had followed her counsel when they were together in the wood : but it was too late. He was, it is true, walking on low ground when the shadow fell upon him, at a considerable distance from the ship, and he thus had some time to prepare for embarking ; but his thoughts were so much occupied with the treasures in his

bundle that he wasted all this precious interval in stowing them away and arranging them more compactly and securely. At last, in great agony and distress, he was carried on board, and sailed away, I fear, to greater suffering still.

After this I saw a little boy coming through the wood who hesitated at every step he took. Sometimes he would fix his eyes on the forbidden fruits and long to taste them. Then he would study the instructions of the King and almost resolve to turn his eyes away and never touch them. He would pluck the fruit, then throw it away, and afterwards pick it up again, and partly eat it. He often did what he well knew he


ought not to do ; and although always sorry afterwards, yet before long he would do the same thing again. It was a long time before I could make up my mind about him. I was soon satisfied that he would rather do right than wrong ; but he seemed to have no resolution or firmness of purpose. There was only one thing which could help him — to pluck many of the fragrant leaves and send them upwards very often. But his conduct in this respect was the same as in every thing else. Sometimes he picked them and warmed them so well that they became very fragrant, and the friends who were watching him began to be full of hope ; but presently he would change, and let his leaves fall cold

from his hand, or cease to pick them at all. I watched until he had travelled over a great part of the island. It was always the same thing with him. He had never been bathed in the pool of chrystal water, and as he went along, it was often offered to him by the persons whom the King's Son had appointed for the purpose. If he had been willing to have this poured over him, it might have been that the Dove would have guided him into a better way; but he was never quite ready. He meant to have it done, but not now. He sailed away at last with the signal floating over him, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." In which direction the ship that bore him steered, I could not see.

CHAPTER V.

He was a man among the few
Sincere on virtue's side;
And all his strength from scripture drew,
To hourly use applied.

Cowper.

 HERE was one other boy, whose journey through the wood I watched, and it was the last. He was quite unlike those I had seen before; for he seldom indulged in forbidden things, and it seemed less of an effort to him to follow the King's instructions than to others. I saw this in many things, in one instance particularly.

It happened that in a certain place, near the side of the road, there grew a great profusion of beautiful flowers which the children had been told they

must not touch, because, although they looked so fair, they were full of poison and dangerous. Some of the children did not care for this and picked them, and others who meant to obey the King, would yet stretch out their hands towards them and then would be hardly able to turn away leaving them untouched; but this boy walked directly by, though he saw how beautiful these flowers were, and knew that many picked them without being apparently hurt by the poison. Had it not been forbidden, he would have picked them as quickly as any one; but as it was, he seemed to have not so much as a wish to gather them. I wondered at this, and being near, I asked him how it happened that he

cared so little for these bright flowers. He looked up in my face, surprised at the question, and said,

"Sir, the King's Son in the far off lands, who loves us all so much, told us not to touch them. Why should I want what He has forbidden?"

This did not answer my question, and as he evidently did not understand what I meant, I determined to follow him a little way on his journey, and observe him closely, that I might find out the reason for myself. After a little while we came to a place where the plant that bore the fragrant leaves did not grow within reach. It sprang up indeed among the high rocks at the side of the road, but it could only be reached with

considerable difficulty and trouble. But this made no difference with him. He was always furnished with the leaves, and when all around were too busy with their play to think of anything else, he always found time to warm them well, so that they would mount quickly upwards. I thought this was a good opportunity for my purpose, and I spoke to him again, and asked him why he did this, when it cost him so much trouble? Then he looked more surprised than before, and said,

“The King’s Son is my dear Friend, and He loves these leaves, and this is the only way I can talk with him. If I did not send these, how should I be able to understand or to keep His instructions?”

He seemed even less able to understand my question than before. I had asked him why he took so much trouble to do this, rather than leave it undone. He seemed hardly to know that it was possible to leave it undone. He had set out on his journey believing that the King loved him, and thinking that in all cases there was no other course but to follow His instructions. After this I asked him no more questions for a long time. I saw that he sometimes made mistakes and did wrong like the other children; but he never changed his purpose for a moment. I walked with him all the way through the wood. He enjoyed very much this part of his journey; but when he came out on the plain,

the sun was hot, and for a while the road was difficult. Afterwards it led up a steep hill where the wind was bitter and cutting. Still he looked cheerful, and again I asked him why he was so. He smiled at the question, and said,

“Why should I not be? See the bright sky yonder. There the King’s Son dwells, and He has a place ready for me there in His own glorious city. This road leads me to the ship which is to carry me there. Why should I not be glad to travel it?”

His journey was a long one, and he travelled through many hard and difficult places in its course. Often his companions in travel looked anxious and troubled, and hesitated in

their steps. But he still went cheerfully on his way and read to his fellow-travellers out of his book, “Cast all your care upon the Lord: for He careth for you.” At last, I saw the dark shadow fall upon him, and he turned without shrinking to follow its course to the ship. Just before he went on board I questioned him again, determined if possible, to know the secret of his travelling so easily and so well. But he told me there was no secret, and showed me where it was written by the King’s Son, that He would help all that put their trust in Him, and grant the desires of all who continued patient and unceasing in prayer. He told me too, that he had disobeyed the instructions

of the King many times when I had not seen him; but he showed me at the same time a promise written in those instructions that all who would trust in the King's Son and strive earnestly to do his will, should be forgiven. I could not learn any thing more from him. He had always loved and trusted in the King's Son, and had never harbored the thought of travelling across the island in any other way than in obedience to His instructions.

So he sailed away. A voice came back from the ship saying, "Train up a child in the way he should go—and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The ship sailed very swiftly; yet so brightly did the light from

the land of happiness shine over her, that she continued long in sight. On her signal flag were these words: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."



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