DAWN.

CHAPTER XV.

It is perhaps time that the reader should know a little of the ancient house and locality where many of the personages of whose history these pages treat, lived, and moved, and had their being.

The Abbey House, so called, was in reality that part of the monastery which had been devoted to the use of successive generations of priors. It was, like the ruins that lay to its rear, entirely built of gray masonry, rendered grayer still by the lichens that fed upon its walls, which were of exceeding strength and thickness. It was a long, irregular building, and roofed with old and narrow tiles, which from red had in the course of ages, faded to sober russet. The banqueting-hall was a separate building at its northern end, and connected with the main dwelling by a covered way. The aspect of the house was westerly, and the front windows looked on to an expanse of park-like land, heavily timbered with oaks of large size, some of them pollards that might have pushed their first leaves in the time of William the Conqueror. In spring their vivid green was diversified by the reddish-brown of a double line of noble walnut-trees, a full half mile in length marking the track of the carriage-drive that led to the Roxham high-road.

Behind the house lay the walled garden, celebrated in the time of the monks as being a fortnight earlier than any other in the neighborhood. Skirting the southern wall of this garden, which was a little less than a hundred paces long, the visitor reached the scattered ruins of the old monastery that had for generations served as a stone quarry to the surrounding villages, but of which enough was left, including a magnificent gateway, to show how great had been its former extent. Passing on through these, he would come to an enclosure that marked the boundaries of the old graveyard, now turned to agricultural uses, and then to the church itself, a building with a very fine tower, but possessing no particular interest, if we except some exceedingly good brasses and a colossal figure of a monk cut out of the solid heart of an oak, and supposed to be the effigy of a prior of the abbey who died in the time of Edward I. Below the church again, and about one hundred and fifty paces from it, was the vicarage, a comparatively modern building, possessing no architectural attraction, and evidently reared out of the remains of the monastery.

At the south end of the Abbey House itself lay a small grass plot and pleasure garden fringed with shrubberies, and adorned with two fine cedar-trees. One of these trees was at its further extremity, and under it there ran a path cut through the dense shrubbery. This path, which was edged with lines and called the "Tunnel Walk," led to the lake, and debouched in the little glade where stood Caresfoot's Staff. The lake itself was a fine piece of water, partly natural and partly constructed by the monks, measuring a full mile round, and from fifty to two hundred yards in width. It was in the shape of a man's shoe, the heel facing west like the house, but projecting beyond it, the narrow part representing the hollow of the instep,. being exactly opposed to it, and the sole swelling out in an easterly direction.

Bartham Abbey was altogether a fine old place, but the most remarkable thing about it was its air of antiquity and the solemnity of its peace. It did not, indeed, strike the spirit with that religious awe which is apt to fall upon us as we gaze along the vaulted aisles of great cathedrals, but it appealed perhaps with equal strength to the softer and more reflective side of our nature. For generation after generation that house had been the home of men like ourselves; they had passed and were forgotten, but it remained, the sole witness of the stories of their lives. Hands of which the very bones had long since crumbled into dust had planted those old oaks and walnuts, that still donned their green robes in summer, and shed them in the autumn, to stand great skeletons through the winter months, awaiting the resurrection of the spring.

There lay upon the place and its surroundings a burden of dead lives, intangible, but none the less real. The air was thick with memories, as suggestive as the gray dust in a vault. Even in the summer, in th efull burst of nature reveling in her strength, the place was sad. But in the winter, when the wind came howling through the groaning trees, and drove the gray scud across an ashy sky, when the birds were dumb, and there were no cattle on the sodden lawn, its isolated melancholy was a palpable thing.

That hoary house might have been a gateway of the dim land we call the Past, looking down in stony sorrow on the follies of those who so soon must cross its portals, and, to the wise who could hear the lesson, pregnant with echoes of the warning voices of many generations.

Here it was that Angela grew up to womanhood.

. . . . . .

Some nine and a half years had passed from the date of the events described in the foregoing pages, when one evening Mr. Fraser bethought him that he had been in-doors all day, and proposed reading till late that night, and that therefore he had better take some exercise.

A tall and somewhat nervous-looking man, with dark eyes, a sensitive mouth, and that peculiar stoop and pallor of complexion which those devoted to much study almost invariably acquire, he had "student" written on his face. His history was a sufficiently common one. He possessed academical abilities of a very high order, and had in his youth distinguished himself greatly at college, both as a classical and a mathematical scholar. When quite young, he was appointed, through the influence of a relation, to his present living, where the income was good and the population very small indeed. Freed from all necessity for exertion, he shut himself up with his books, having his little round of parish work for relaxation, and never sought to emerge from the quite of his aimless studies to struggle for fame and place in the laborious world. Mr. Fraser was what people call an able man thrown away. If they had known his shy, sensitive nature a little better, they would have understood that he was infinitely more suited for the solitary and peaceful lot in life which he had chosen, than to become a unit in the turbulent and greedy crowd that is struggling through all the ages up the slippery steps of the temple of that greatest of our gods—Success.

There are many such men—probably you, my reader, know one or two. With infinite labor they store up honey from the fields of knowledge, collect endless data from the statistics of science, pile up their calculations against the very stars; and all to no end. As a rule, they do not write books; they gather the learning for the learning's sake, and for the very love of it rejoice to count their labor lost. And thus they go on from year to year, until the golden bowl is broken and the pitcher broken at the fountain, and the gathered knowledge sinks, or appears to sink, back to whence it came. Alas! that one generation cannot hand on its wisdom and experience—more especially its experience—to another, in its perfect form! If it could, we men should soon become as gods.

It was a mild evening in the latter end of October when Mr. Fraser started on his walk. The moon was up in the heavens as he, an hour later, made his way from the side of the lake, where he had been wandering, back to the churchyard through which he had to pass to reach the vicarage. Just before he came to the gate, however, he was surprised, in such a solitary spot, to see a slight figure leaning against the wall opposite the place where lay the mortal remains of the old squire and his daughter-in-law, Hilda. He stood still and watched; the figure appeared to be gazing steadily at the graves. Presently it turned and saw him, and he recognized the great gray eyes and golden hair of little Angela Caresfoot.

"Angela, my dear, what are you doing here at this time of night?" he asked, in some surprise.

She blushed a little as she shook hands rather awkwardly with him.

"Don't be angry with me," she said, in a deprecatory voice; "but I was so lonely this evening that I came here for company."

"Came here for company! What do you mean?"

She hung her head.

"Come," he said, "tell me what you mean."

"I don't know myself, How can I tell you?"

He looked more puzzled than ever, and she observed it and went on:

"I will try and tell you, but you must not be cross like Pigott when she cannot understand me. Sometimes I feel ever so much alone, as though I was looking for something and could not find it, and then I come and stand here and look at my mother's grave, and I get company and am not lonely any more. That is all I know; I cannot tell you any more. Do you think me silly? Pigott does."

"I think you are a very strange child. Are you not afraid to come here alone at night!"

"Afraid—oh, no! Nobody comes here after dark, because they say that the ruins are full of spirits. Jakes told me that. But I must be stupid; I cannot see them; and I want so very much to see them. I hope it is not wrong, but I told my father so the other day, and he turned white and was angry with Pigott for giving me such ideas; but you know Pigott did not give them to me at all. I am not afraid to come; I like it, it is so quiet, and, if one listens enough in the quiet I always think one may hear something that other people do not hear."

"Do you hear anything, then?"

"Yes, I hear things,but I cannot understand them. Listen to the wind in the branches of that tree, the chestnut, off which the leaf is falling now. It says something, if only I could catch it."

"Yes, child, yes, you are right in a way; all Nature tells the same eternal tale, if our ears were not stopped to its voices," he answered, with a sigh; indeed, the child's talk had struck a vein of thought familiar to his own mind, and, what is more, it deeply interested him; there was a quaint, far-off wisdom in it.

"It is pleasant to-night, is it not, Mr. Fraser?" said the little maid, "though everything is dying. The things die softly without any pain this year; last year they were all killed in thr rain and wind. Look at that cloud floating across the moon, is it not beautiful? I wonder what it is the shadow of; I think all the clouds are shadows of something up in heaven."

"And when there are no clouds?"

"Oh! then heaven is quite still and happy."

"But heaven is always happy."

"Is it? I don't understand how it can be always happy if we go there. There must be so many to be sorry for."

Mr. Fraser mused a little; that last remark was difficult to answer. He looked at the fleecy cloud, and, falling into her humor, said:

"I think your cloud is the shadow of an eagle carrying a lamb to its little ones."

"And I think," she answered, confidently, "that it is the shadow of an angel carrying a baby home."

Again he was silenced; the idea was infinitely more poetical than his own.

"This," he reflected, "is a child of a curious mental caliber.

Before he could pursue the thought further, she broke in upon it in quite a different strain.

"Have you seen Jack and Jill? They are jolly."

"Who are Jack and Jill?"

"Why, my ravens, of course. I got them out of the old tree with a hole in it at the end of the lake."

"The tree at the end of the lake! Why, the hole where the ravens nest is fifty feet up. Who got them for you?"

"I got them myself. Sam—you know Sam—was afraid to go up. He said he should fall, and that the old birds would peck his eyes. So I went by myself one morning quite early, with a bag tied round my neck, and got up. It was hard work, and I nearly tumbled once; but I got on the bough beneath the hole at last. It shook very much; it is so rotten, you have no idea. There were three little ones in the nest, all with great mouths. I took two, and left one for the old birds. When I was nearly down again, the old birds found me out, and flew at me, and beat my head with their wings, and pecked—oh, they did peck! Look here," and she showed him a scar on her hand; "that's where they pecked. But I stuck to my bag, and got down at last, and I'm glad I did, for we are great friends now; and I am sure the cross old birds would be quite pleased if they knew how nicely I am educating their young ones, and how their manners have improved. But I say, Mr. Fraser, don't tell Pigott; she cannot climb trees, and does not like to see me do it. She does not know I went after them myself."

Mr. Fraser laughed.

"I won't tell her, Angela, my dear; but you must be careful—you might tumble and kill yourself."

"I don't think I shall, Mr. Fraser, unless I am meant to. God looks after me as much when I am up a tree as when I am upon the ground."

Once more he had nothing to say, he could not venture to disturb her faith.

"I will walk home with you, my dear. Tell me, Angela, would you like to learn?"

"Learn!—learn what?"

"Books, and the languages that other nations, nations that have passed away used to talk, and how to calculate numbers and distances.

"Yes, I should like to learn very much; but who will teach me? I have learned all Pigott knows two years ago, and since then I have been trying to learn about the trees and flowers and stars; but I look and watch, and can't understand."

"Ah! my dear, contact with Nature is the highest education; but the mind that would appreciate her wonders must have a foundation of knowledge to work upon. The uneducated man is rarely sensitive to the thousand beauties and marvels of the fields around him, and the skies above him. But, if you like, I will teach you, Angela. I am practically an idle man, and it will give me great pleasure; but you must promise to work and do what I tell you."

"Oh, how good you are! Of course I will work. When am I to begin?"

"I don't know—to-morrow, if you like; but I must speak to your father first."

Her face fell a little at the mention of her father's name, but presently she said, quietly:

"My father; he will not care if I learn or not. I hardly ever see my father; he does not like me. I see nobody but Pigott and you and old Jakes, and Sam sometimes. You need not ask my father; he will never miss me whilst I am learning. Ask Pigott."

At that moment Pigott herself hove in view, in a great flurry.

"Oh, here you are, Miss Angela! Where have you been to, you naughty girl? At some of your star-gazing tricks again, I'll be bound, frightening the life out of a body,. It's just too bad of you, Miss Angela."

The little girl looked at her with a peculiarly winning smile, and took her very solid hand between her own tiny palms.

"Don't be cross, Pigott, dear," she said. "I didn't mean to frighten you. I couldn't help going—I couldn't indeed; and then I stopped talking to Mr. Fraser."

"There, there, I should just like to know who can be cross with you when you put on those ways. Are your feet wet? Ah, I thought so, Run in and take them off."

"Won't that be just a little difficult?" and she was gone with a merry laugh.

"There, sir, that's just like her, catching a body up like, and twisting what she says, till you don't know which is head and which is heels. I'll be bound you found her down yonder,' and she nodded toward the churchyard.

"Yes."

Piggot drew a little nearer, and spoke in a low voice.

"'Tis my belief, sir, that that child sees things; she is just the oddest child I ever saw. There's nothing she likes better than to slip out of a night, and to go to that there beastly churchyard, saving your presence, for 'company,' as she calls it—nice sort of company indeed. And it is just the same way with storms. You remember that dreadful gale a month ago, the one that took down the North Grove and blew the spire off Rewtham Church. Well, just when it was at its worst, and I was a-sitting and praying that the roof might keep over our heads, I look round for Angela, and can't see her. 'Some of your tricks again,' thinks I to myself, and just then up comes Mrs. Jakes to say that Sam had seen little missy creeping down the tunnel walk. I was that scared that I ran down, got hold of Sam, for Jakes said he wouldn't go out with all them trees a-flying about in the air like straws—no, not for a thousand pounds, and off we set after her." Here Pigott paused to groan at the recollection of that walk.

"Well," said Mr. Fraser, who was rather interested— everything about this queer child interested him; "where did you find her?"

"Well, sir, you know where the old wall runs out into the water, below Caresfoot's Staff there? Well, at the end of it there's a post sunk in, with a ring in it to tie boats to. Now, would you believe it? out there at the end of the wall, and tied to the ring by a scarf passed round her middle, was that dreadful child. She was standing there, her back against the post, right in the teeth of the gale, with the spray dashing over her, her arms stretched out before her, her hat gone, her long hair standing out behind, straight as an iron bar, and her eyes flashing as though they were on fire, and all the while there were the great trees crashing down all round in a way enough to make a body sick with fright. We got her back safe, thank God; but how long we shall keep her, I'm sure I don't know. Now she is drowning herself in the lake, for she takes to the water like a duck, and now breaking her neck off trees, and now going to ghosts in the churchyard for company. It's wearing me to the bone, that's what it is."

Mr. Fraser smiled, for, to tell the truth, Pigott's bones were pretty comfortably covered.

"Come," he said, "you would not part with her for all her wicked deeds, would you?"

"Part with her," answered Pigott, in hot indignation,. "part with my little beauty! I would rather part with my head. The love, there never was another like her, nor never will be, with her sweet ways; and, if I know anything about girls, she'll be the beauty of England, she will. She's made for a beautiful woman; and look at them eyes and forehead and hair—where did you ever see the like? And, as for her queer ways, what can you expect from a child as has got a great empty mind and nothing to put in it, and no one to talk to but a common woman like me, and a father"— here she dropped her voice—"as is a miser, and hates the sight of his own flesh and blood."

"Hush! you should not say such things, Pigott!— Now, I will tell you something; I am going on to ask your master to allow me to educate Angela."

"I'm right glad to hear it, sir. She's sharp enough to learn anything, and it's kind of you to teach her. If you can make her mind like what her body will be if she lives, somebody will be a lucky man one of these days. Good-night, sir, and many thanks for bringing missy home.

Next day Angela began her education.

CHAPTER XVI.

Reader, we are about to see Angela again, and to see a good deal of her; but you must be prepared for a change in her personal appearance, for the curtain has been down for ten years since last you met the child whose odd propensities excited Pigott's wonder and indignation, and Mr. Fraser's interest, and ten years, as we all know, can work many changes in the history of the world and individuals. In ten years some have been swept clean off the board and their places taken by others; a few have grown richer, many poorer, some of us sadder, some wiser, and all of us ten years older. Now, this was exactly what had happened to little Angela—that is, the Angela we knew as little and ten years make curious differences between the slim child of nine and a half and the woman of nearly twenty.

When we last saw her, Angela was about to commence her education. Let us reintroduce ourselves on the memorable evening when, after ten years of study, Mr. Fraser, a master by no means easily pleased, expressed himself unable to teach her any more.

It is Christmas eve. Drip, drop, drip, falls the rain from the leafless boughs on to the sodden earth. The apology for daylight that has been doing its dull duty for the last few hours is slowly effacing itself, and the gale is celebrating the fact, and showing its joy at the closing in of the melancholy night by howling its loudest through the trees, and flogging the flying scud it has brought with it from the sea, till it whirls across the sky like a succession of ghostly race-horses.

This is outside the vicarage; let us look within. In a well-worn arm-chair in the comfortable study, near to a table covered with books, and holding some loose sheets of foolscap in his hand, sits Mr. Fraser. His hair is a little grayer than when he began Angela's education, about as gray as rather accommodating hair will get at the age of fifty-three; otherwise his general appearance is much the same, and his face as refined and gentleman-like as ever. Presently, he lays down the sheets of paper which he has been studying attentively, and says;

"Your solution is perfectly sound, Angela; but you have arrived at it in a characteristic fashion, and by your own road. Not but what your method has some merits—for one thing, it is more concise than my own; but, on the other hand, it shows feminine weakness. It is not possible to follow every step from your premises to your conclusion, correct as it is."

"Ah!" says a low voice, with a happy ripple in it, the owner of which is busy with some tea things out of range of the ring of light thrown by the double reading lamp, "you often blame me for jumping at conclusions, but what does it matter, provided they are right? The whole secret is that I used the equivalent algebraic formula, but suppressed the working in order to puzzle you," and the voice laughed sweetly.

"That is not worthy of a mathematician," said Mr. Fraser, with some irritation; "it is nothing but a trick, a tour de force."

"The solution is correct you say?"

"Quite."

"Then I maintain that it is perfectly mathematical; the object of mathematics is to arrive at the truth."

"Vox et preterea nihil. Come out of that corner, my dear. I hate arguing with a person I cannot see. But there, what is the use of arguing at all? The fact is, Angela, you are a first class mathematician, and I am only second class. I am obliged to stick to the old tracks; you cut a Roman road of your own. Great masters are entitled to do that. That algebraic formula never occurred to me when I worked the problem out, and it took me two days to do it."

To Be Continued.

TIME'S CHANGES.

Whiffers—Ah! How de do? Well, out with it, old man. What success? You said you were going back to your native town to hunt up your first love, from whom you parted years ago—the "airy, fairy Lillian," you raved about, you know. Did you find her?

Bliffers, sadly—Y-e-s. She's drawing $20 a week as the champion fat woman of a dime museum.

A WOMAN'S ADMISSIONS.

Mrs. G. G. Buckler's Opinions on the Abilities of Men and Women.

The article in the current number of the North American Review, on "The Lesser Man," is remarkable, because the author, although a highly educated woman, concedes almost everything that has ever been asserted by men concerning the superiority of the masculine intellect. We call the writer, Mrs. G. G. Buckler, highly educated, for the reason that, having entered Girton College as the holder of a scholarship, she eventually took a first-class in the classical tripos at the Cambridge University examination. That she knows something about the masculine intellect from observation and experience is evident not only from her collegiate training, which brought her into competition with men, but also from the fact that she is a niece of Prof. Max Muller and a grand-niece of Charles Kingsley and James Anthony Froude.

After pointing out how signally woman's opportunities have been multiplied of late years in civilized countries, or how notably, to use the cant phrase, woman's sphere has been enlarged, Mrs. Buckler directs attention to an economical side of the question, which is too often overlooked. She says truly that the rush of women into certain vocations, especially that of teaching, "has overstocked the market and tended to reduce salaries, if not to lower the standard of excellence, an evil aggravated by the prevailing want of combination among the women workers themselves. The cheapness of female labor makes employers engage the wives and daughters, and leave the men at home." Manifestly Mrs. Buckler is familiar with the fact known to political economists that under the regime of individualism, a regime unlikely to be overthrown, the wages of an adult male worker tend to adjust themselves to the theory that he has to support not only himself, but a wife, together with at least two or three children. If all women were to compete for the various employments hitherto reserved for men, it is obvious that, as the number of producers would be doubled, while the number of consumers would remain stationary, the rate of wages would have to be reduced one-half.

Having specified the opportunities which women have enjoyed in the past or have recently attained, Mrs. Buckler asks what have they made out of them? Her answer is that, if one looks impartially over the historical record, one cannot maintain that "the widespread mental and artistic activity of women has in a single instance achieved anything absolutely first-rate, whether as creation or as discovery." So far as the field of letters is concerned, it certainly cannot be asserted that women has only just started. She has been writing for over 2,000 years and in almost every civilized country. "Yet nowhere," says Mrs. Buckler, "do we find her in the highest rank." Of real feminine poets one can only name the half-mythical Sappho and, possibly in our own day Mrs. Browning and Christina Rossetti. In prose our author meets with the same absence of supreme excellence. No woman has ever written a great history. Masculine production has been everywhere superior, except in the branches of letter writing and novels of domestic life, which make, she thinks, a special demand upon the feminine qualities of quick evolution and ready observation. In dramatic composition no woman has gained for herself lasting fame. The author attributes to her sex in literature a want of closeness of grasp, a want of balance, and a want of precision in form; these shortcomings, which are pronounced incontestable, are ascribed to a lack of sympathetic power or to imperfect training in the study of great models. On the other hand, Mrs. Buckler believes that women may claim to have brought into literature, or to have intensified in it, two inestimable qualities purity of sentiment without sentimentality and breadth of human sympathy. If to this immeasurable service be added their indirect inspirational influence upon the writings of men, our author submits that great importance in literature must be conceded to women, though not supreme excellence.

It is comparatively easy to prove that in discovery and invention in the abstract and applied sciences, and in architectural, pictorial, and plastic art, woman's achievements have, in the historical period at all events fallen far short of man's. We shall not follow Mrs. Buckler through this part of her argument, but note, that, by way of conclusion, she recognizes logical cogency in the queries: "If women were ever intellectually equal to men, when and why did they begin to fall behind? and, if they never were equal, how can they hope to catch up now, when masculine education is advancing at as great a rate as feminine?"

THE GREEN SUPERSTITION.

It is singular how varied is the superstition regarding the color green in different countries. It is the national color of the Irish and the imperial green of France is the perpetuation of the royal color of the old Merovingian kings. How different is the sentiment toward the color in Scotland. There it is held in the utmost aversion, if not fear. With some of the clans, particularly the Caithness men, it is considered fatal. With this clan the superstition is altogether born of the results of Flodden field, where the Caithness men wore the color. It is also considered unlucky by the Ogilvie and Grahame clans, the latter telling a story of an old man who was thrown from his horse and killed in a fox chase because he had a green lash in his riding whip.