

THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN.



Thoughts on the Life of St. Peter.

St. Peter's Third Imprisonment.—Acts xii.

THOUGH twice already in the history of St. Peter we have seen him cast into prison, there is no previous account so interesting as that related in Acts xii. for Peter here had almost finished his "noble array of martyrs." The Herod mentioned in the title of Acts was the grandson of the Herod who slew the Infants, and nephew of that Herod who beheaded John the Baptist. They were an evil race of men.

In the history of the twelfth of Acts, Herod begins to persecute the Church, and by his command James is slain by the sword—James was one of those two apostles to whom our Lord said, "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of" (St. Mark x. 39)—the cup of suffering. James was the first of the apostles to drink that cup even unto death. The martyrdom of James appears to have given great pleasure to the Jews. Herod therefore to win the favour of the people proceeded to take Peter also. It was the time of the Passover, and multitudes would be gathered at Jerusalem. Would not Peter remember how just at the same Feast his Lord had been a prisoner and had died? There were two considerable parties—on the one side, proud King Herod in all his power, and, on the other, a little knot of people, despised Christians. Which party would be the most likely to win in the contest? The king relied on the power of his strong prison, and the sixteen soldiers who were to guard Peter (v. 4-6). What did the Christians rely upon? The power of prayer (v. 5). When Christian, in "Pilate's Engraver," was about to fight Apollonius, his weapon was "All Prayer." Peter's friends were with anxiety lest they should lose him, and so they went to God about it, and that "without ceasing." It was the only thing they could do for Peter, but it was a great thing. "Whosoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive." That was Christ's promise, and the promise was to be fulfilled to those praying Christians. How God would deliver Peter, they could not tell, but they spread the matter before Him. And God sent His angels to set the prisoner free. We read of angels in the Bible as being sent on messages of mercy, and messages of judgment—messages of mercy to Abraham and Lot, Hagar and Kishah; messages of judgment to Sodom and Gomorrah, and the great camp of the Egyptian army. An angel was now to be God's messenger of mercy to St. Peter. How striking is the picture of Peter in prison—the man who was to be the first to lay quietly asleep, destined to two soldiers! Peter had no fear of death. What would death do for him? It would but take him to his dear Master. Peter had forgiven him and saved him; could Peter fear to go to Him? He is roused from sleep by the bright angel, and told to

clothe himself and follow. The big prison doors swing back, and Peter is free! In tender care, the angel leads Peter on a little way, and then vanishes. Peter then, having "come to himself," knows that he is "delivered" (ver. 11); knows that it is all true and real, and that he is a free man. When God sets any man's soul free from the prison of sin and Satan, he will know it also. Chains have been round about him; he has held him fast. Then, by God's power, those chains are broken, for Christ came to open the prison doors for such prisoners; and when they are set free, they know it. "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and we are delivered" (Ps. cxv. 7). Sin is a terrible bondage, but no greater blessing in the world can ever come to a man than being brought out of that bondage. When the children of Israel came out of the Egypt, "the house of bondage," what a beautiful song they sang!

St. Peter's deliverance is a beautiful picture of a soul set free from spiritual bondage. It is also a blessed evidence of God's willingness to answer prayer. "Prayer would the Hand that moves the world; and 'with God all things are possible.'" M. E.

Now Blanche Troake's Question box Answered.

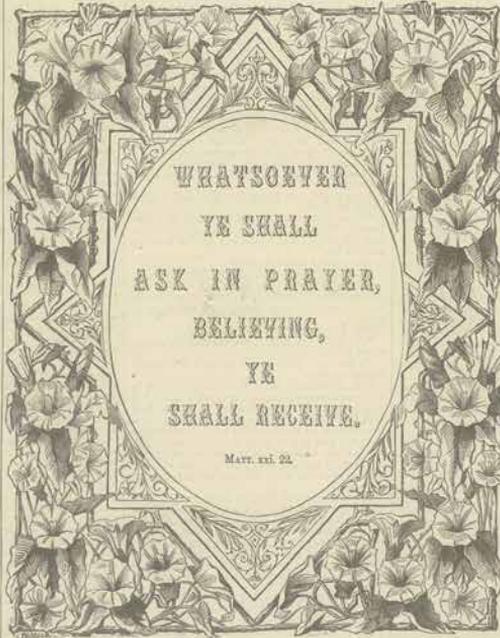
Blanche, I do so wish you would come with me this evening, instead of going with that other set, it would be so much better for you; I know you would like it better so, if you would only try it once."

"Now, Annie, there you see it is again, always lecturing me, always wanting me to spend my Saturday evenings' holiday in going about with you waiting, dull, stupid, poor people in dingy back streets, instead of going and strolling in the park with Hettie and Lucy, and their cousins, and showing my new bonnet."

"But it's not a back street that I'm going to visit in, Blanche, it's a pretty hamlet in the country, Mrs. Langridge, the lady who arranges all the district visiting work in this part of the town, will never let us girls, who have to sit so much at our needle, or at the sewing-machine, do any visiting in the streets; she always gives out tickets in the country, because she says on Saturday afternoon a walk into the country does us so much good."

"Are there sweetbirds and wild roses in the hedge when you go, Annie?" asked Blanche, her bright, still child-like face glowing interested and eager. "Well, it certainly does sound all very beautiful," said Blanche, her laughing young eyes overflowing with a sweet seriousness as she spoke. "Do you know, Annie, I really do think I will sum day go with you, but I mustn't be this late, and I've promised Hettie and Lucy first faithfully to go with them to-day. As soon as their's my new bonnet! I am so longing to make Hettie curious with it, and so longing to see the people admiring looks at it in the park. I really must go this afternoon, good-by, Annie, I'm afraid I shan't catch Hettie and Lucy up if I don't make haste."

This conversation took place on the stairs of a large dressmaker's establishment. The dressmaker, Annie Byatt, and Blanche Troake were two of the clearest and most forward of the apprentices engaged in the business, and as they had begun their career as milliners at such the same period, and generally sat near each other, and took counsel together over their work, they had grown into friends, though their characters and dispositions were very different. Blanche, though her temper was easy and kindly, and her spirits robust and lively, and there was very much that was lovable and sweet in her nature, she was giddy, and wild, and fond of dress and display. Annie was not nearly so pretty as Blanche, and her manner was so quiet and reserved, and so unattractive; yet there was an earnest sweetness in her face, a clear light in her eyes, which always



(St. xv.). When God sets a man's soul free, he, too, has a right to sing.

When Peter realised his deliverance, he went to the house of Mary, where many were gathered together, praying for him. He had to stand waiting for some time, for those inside, even when Rhoda recognised his voice, could not believe that it was really himself, but said, "It is his angel." At length he is admitted, and stands in their midst. These people were astonished at God's quick and wonderful answer to their prayer. Yet when we pray, we ought to be on the watch for God's answer. Has He not said, "Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear?" (Isa. lviii. 22). Can He not "do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think?" (Eph. iii. 20).

gained upon those who were much wiser than she. She was thoughtful and rather silent, and in general more full of sense than most.

But there was a greater difference still than any of those we have hitherto spoken of between the two friends. Blanche thought the things of this world; Annie had learnt to anchor her heart firmly, and ever alert and true, on to the Rock of Ages.

It was the one great wish of Annie's life to have her friend seek this same refuge. Many a prayer did she offer up for her, and sorry did she prove to see that Blanche was growing more and more infatuated with Hettie and Lucy Green, and a mob of young women whose minds were entirely given up to dress and all kinds of light, worldly vanities. Blanche was some two or three years younger than the two Greens, and this fact had given them an extra influence over her.

Annie Bryant's thoughts dwelt much and sadly on her friend that April afternoon, as she took her way to the little hamlet, where, every Saturday, she employed her only till of spare time on a week-day in doing a small share of house to house visiting among the poor. The deep lanes that she passed along had all draped with delicate ferns and soft velvety green mosses, and all studded with many-tinted spring flowers. "The branches, just flushing with their first bright verdure, must cover her head and form a trellis, beneath which she walked. Hard by, a blackbird and a brook which ran through the meadows, were keeping up a ceaseless din of verdurous melody. It was a sparkling afternoon, and the sky seemed laughing with the fields, which laughed back again, while a dancing brook came lads with a thousand shy perfumes from the neighbouring woodlands.

Annie Bryant's sweet, quiet nature made her enjoy a solitary country walk of this kind more than most girls of her age would have done, but still the remembrance of Blanche cast a shadow upon her tranquil happiness. "This is so fit to be a precious jewel in the King's crown," she thought; "and yet she has not the one thing needful." Then she paused, and with her clasped hands resting on a gateway, prayed for Blanche more earnestly than she had ever prayed before.

She was going on, her mind full of all sorts of thoughts and plans for the poor people she was about to visit, when suddenly she heard a quick, light step behind her. She glanced round, expecting to see some school-child here, or some wanderer, and, to her surprise, beheld Blanche Brooks speeding after her down the lane.

"Is anything the matter, Blanche dear?" asked Annie, pausing.

"Nothing is the matter exactly," cried the girl, her cheeks glowing and her breath coming fast and quickly. "But I will never take a walk with Hettie and Lucy Green again—never, never."

"Why, what have they done that to offend your little loyalty?" asked Annie, smiling, as she caught at the blanket check and flushing eyes.

"I'll tell you all about it, Annie," said Blanche, slipping her arm into that of her friend, and beginning to walk on as if her whistles it she spoke more com-

posedly. "We were amusing down High Street, when we met a poor, feeble-looking old woman, in a very shabby shawl and bonnet, carrying a basket. She slipped upon a piece of orange peel and fell, and all the little parcels which were in her basket were scattered hither and thither, rolling on every side. I was so sorry for her, she looked so old and weak and helpless, so I ran and lifted her up, and put everything back into her basket nicely for her, and wiped the dirt off her poor faded stuff dress with my pocket-handkerchief, and gave her my shawl, and walked a little way with her till she was quite sure she could go alone; for though she was not much heart, she was a good deal shaken and frightened."

"That was beautifully and nobly done, Blanche dear," said Annie, stroking her hand.

"Well, while I was doing this, I never thought anything about Hettie and Lucy, but now it struck

me out what sort of people you were talking for intimate friends. But tell me, dear, how did you come to follow me?"

"The thought of your face rose up before me somehow, when I was crying; for I did cry, to think how hard and heartless you had been to me, when I had so looked up to and followed. Then I recollected that you once told me Wickford was the place where you went on Saturday afternoons; so I started off, and did not stop till I overtook you."

Annie Bryant revealed a world of silent thanksgiving; was not that surely the beginning of an answer to her prayer?

"And you will come with me now, Blanche, to see some of my poor people?"

"Yes, I think I will," replied the girl, rather hesitatingly.

"And won't you try any," went on Annie earnestly, "to learn more about Hettie in this little hamlet, and give your heart to Him?"

"I don't understand yet enough about these sort of things."

"It is not difficult, Blanche, dear, for those who come with a willing soul."

The two girls walked on in silence for a little while after that, but Annie's eyes shone softly as she saw and then turned them upon her friend, for she could see that Blanche's young face was grave and thoughtful beyond her years. All length Blanche said suddenly:

"Annie, I wish I could fully see and understand what this religion you talk of is, and how you do it."

A smile lit up Annie Bryant's face, as if a sudden bright, happy thought had come to her. "Come in here and see," she said, pausing before a little cottage gate, for they had now reached the hamlet.

Blanche followed her friend, wondering, up the trim strip of garden, where not a weed grew, and where, on either side, a few hardy spring flowers were beginning to peep at the sun. The cottage door was only on the latch, and Annie opened it and entered without knocking, like one familiar with the house and its inmates. Blanche glanced around curiously, not knowing, after her companion's words, what to expect.

There, on a low sunshiny window, so that a full sunlight touched her causatively, lay a girl of some sixteen or seventeen years of age.

Her figure was very thin and fragile, her complexion pale and sickly; but these were the only signs of illness about her. Had her poor health so seriously retarded a smile as the smile which gleamed from her face to her eyes, and shed a radiance round her brow? Were ever strong hands so keen as those little hands were with their magic of turning all that old frock into what was very like a new one? Was ever voice clearer and more cheery than the voice which, just as they entered, was crying out to the younger girl standing leaning over the fire?

"Now, Lizzy, dear, put on the kettle, and make the fire burn well, that I may have a hot cup of tea, and a happy steam all round me, for when I become in from work."

"Well, may I, now you do—lay?" said Annie Bryant, standing by the cook's work, for when she had which laid down its active needs for a moment



"HELPING THE HELPLESS."

me as strange that they had not come to assist the old woman; and I turned back to look for them. I had not far to go. There they stood smiling with laughter, and saying that it was the best fun in the world to see the old woman fall, and that they should like to be able to draw a picture of her and me walking arm in arm down the street, and when I told them that they were very unfeeling and very unkind, then Hettie lost her temper, and went from laughing to scolding, and called me a poor, mean-spirited thing; to let myself be seen walking in the streets with such a wretched, shabby old woman as that, and declared that I had disgraced myself before the whole town; she should not like to be seen with me again. I grew very angry on my side too, and told her I would never have for companions girls who had no hearts. And I never will, I'll keep to that, Annie."

"I'm glad of that, Blanche; glad you have found

Her figure was very thin and fragile, her complexion pale and sickly; but these were the only signs of illness about her. Had her poor health so seriously retarded a smile as the smile which gleamed from her face to her eyes, and shed a radiance round her brow? Were ever strong hands so keen as those little hands were with their magic of turning all that old frock into what was very like a new one? Was ever voice clearer and more cheery than the voice which, just as they entered, was crying out to the younger girl standing leaning over the fire?

"Now, Lizzy, dear, put on the kettle, and make the fire burn well, that I may have a hot cup of tea, and a happy steam all round me, for when I become in from work."

"Well, may I, now you do—lay?" said Annie Bryant, standing by the cook's work, for when she had which laid down its active needs for a moment

"Oh! I have been without pain the whole day, isn't that wonderful? I have been so busy," and she gave a merry little laugh which was like a lily's song. "I have been hearing the children say their *Saturday Lessons*, and turning little Billy's frock, and watching Lizzie clean the house, and telling her how to do it, until, between you, my father surprised it all as soon and tidy and bright as a box of new toys, and now I am telling her about father's boys."

"But she can't be really ill," said Blanche, glancing wonderingly, saw at her companion, now at May. "She has been lying here for the last three years, often in severe pain," said Annie's reply.

"But how is it possible, if I don't understand it," cried Blanche, "why I am so dull and complaining and so nervous, now?" "I am afraid, if I only have a headache for a day."

"May, tell Miss Brooks how it is that you can be so brave and bright, and strong with all your suffering and weakness," said Annie, turning to the cottage girl with sunshine in her eyes.

"It is because I have found my way to the Lord who taught me, and learned the whole proclamation of His salvation, and saw, through Him, and in Him, and by Him, who has washed my sins away, I have strength and courage, answered his, with sweet sweetness in his look and tone."

"Now, Blanche, how do you think you could just now receive so sufficient answer?" said Annie softly.

Yes, Blanche had received an answer and a lesson which, with God's help, would do the full work in her, and Annie was, ever, in, or her knees giving thanks, for her friend was treating the same upward race as herself.

and it is foolishly. My dear brother always says it is little or no use visiting the sick too often. Of course at that it is quite proper to read the Commemorative Prayer, but not to go to poor folk when they are delicate and half recovered."

"I'll try to be like Adelaide," I ventured to say, "I should wish Mr. Durant to pray by my side and tell me of the Service."

"Ah, well, my dear child, let us hope you will not be ill—that when you say I dare say you will not do so. Theodore is very excellent and very good, but he holds peculiar notions. I don't think he would be so good as my brother, if my brother had known what kind of views he held, he would have been so anxious to have him here."

"Miss Goodlake," I exclaimed, "it is such a blessing to the parish that Mr. Durant came."

"Oh, well, well, my dear! I know Theodore is a favorite of yours, and vice versa; but I am of the old school, and I do not see that the new is my letter. As a sturgeon's sister, and daughter of an abolitionist—er, so I have often told you, our father was Archbishop of Boston—I am bound to uphold the Church, and I like all things properly done, and I cannot abide any dissipation in the house. We are here in the gloom, where two of the leading tradesmen support the chapel; but I think Theodore is wronging himself out, and not doing us any good. I got up a table of the old part for him on Sunday night, as I thought he must be dead long after ten services, and going to Oxford in the evening, and he had but preferred to be only took care as a unitarian, and he was quite well. But he has a kind heart. Look at him now!"

And from the window we saw Mr. Durant, with the Rector in his arms, pacing up and down with him in the autumn sunlight, as kindly and careful as if they had been men and men.

Miss Goodlake watched the two figures, as they passed and regazed the window, with dim eyes.

"Poor James! he has been so well the last few days. I believe it is indigestion; but I can't persuade him to take a mixture that I used to make for my poor mother. People who study much and their brains often suffer from indigestion, and James has been a great scholar, you know."

Poor Miss Goodlake! she heard and listened her to the link fence on it passed; but as the Rector raised his head to look at his sister, the expression on it was entirely vacant, and he made no answering sign.

"He is tired," she said. "Theodore forgets James is not so young as he is."

The kindness of Miss Goodlake is not uncommon. We persuade ourselves that these we love cannot shed signs of decay and passing away from us, and we try to persuade others also to agree with us.

"Tell me how Adelaide is," I said, when, as I was leaving the Rectory, Mr. Durant met me. "Is you see her?"

"Every day. She is very ill, and the complaint is very fearful. Till it is seen, it can hardly be improved."

"Not in the least; and if I am sure by each of it, it would be two of the beds at Overland, where there have been very bad cases."

"Is Miss Meyer coming?"

"I hear nothing about it. He could do no good, and it is not surprising that he says any. Madame Meyer seems an excellent nurse, she is so calm and undervalued. I pity poor Philip now. He sits solitary in that old dark library, and the days pass away slowly. But his conscience haunts him. What a fine fellow he is!" Mr. Durant exclaimed.

"Oh, I am so glad you have found out how good he is! I am sure he would have been so very patient and uncomplaining."

"He misses your visits very much," Mr. Durant replied. "But it is to be some time before it will be safe for you to go to Overland."

"Why is it safe for you, then?" I asked quickly.

"I have been vaccinated,"

"I have been vaccinated,"

"Why should I be afraid. The path of duty is always safe. But come," he said briskly, "I am going to call on Lady Smith, and try to persuade her to set up a new desk of her *Prison Magazine* for the Library. I am trying to get something well so instructive literature."

"No say that. Fifty years ago the *Prison Magazine* was considered a perfect wonder of eloquence, and you, I compared with one of the penny periodicals of these days, as if it were a child's dimming head. And the old woodcuts in the *Children's*

Friend and the *Child's Magazine* may well prove as little as no use visiting the sick too often. Of course at that it is quite proper to read the Commemorative Prayer, but not to go to poor folk when they are delicate and half recovered."

"I'll try to be like Adelaide," I ventured to say, "I should wish Mr. Durant to pray by my side and tell me of the Service."

"Ah, well, my dear child, let us hope you will not be ill—that when you say I dare say you will not do so. Theodore is very excellent and very good, but he holds peculiar notions. I don't think he would be so good as my brother, if my brother had known what kind of views he held, he would have been so anxious to have him here."

"Miss Goodlake," I exclaimed, "it is such a blessing to the parish that Mr. Durant came."

"Oh, well, well, my dear! I know Theodore is a favorite of yours, and vice versa; but I am of the old school, and I do not see that the new is my letter. As a sturgeon's sister, and daughter of an abolitionist—er, so I have often told you, our father was Archbishop of Boston—I am bound to uphold the Church, and I like all things properly done, and I cannot abide any dissipation in the house. We are here in the gloom, where two of the leading tradesmen support the chapel; but I think Theodore is wronging himself out, and not doing us any good. I got up a table of the old part for him on Sunday night, as I thought he must be dead long after ten services, and going to Oxford in the evening, and he had but preferred to be only took care as a unitarian, and he was quite well. But he has a kind heart. Look at him now!"

And from the window we saw Mr. Durant, with the Rector in his arms, pacing up and down with him in the autumn sunlight, as kindly and careful as if they had been men and men.

Miss Goodlake watched the two figures, as they passed and regazed the window, with dim eyes.

"Poor James! he has been so well the last few days. I believe it is indigestion; but I can't persuade him to take a mixture that I used to make for my poor mother. People who study much and their brains often suffer from indigestion, and James has been a great scholar, you know."

Poor Miss Goodlake! she heard and listened her to the link fence on it passed; but as the Rector raised his head to look at his sister, the expression on it was entirely vacant, and he made no answering sign.

"He is tired," she said. "Theodore forgets James is not so young as he is."

The kindness of Miss Goodlake is not uncommon. We persuade ourselves that these we love cannot shed signs of decay and passing away from us, and we try to persuade others also to agree with us.

"Tell me how Adelaide is," I said, when, as I was leaving the Rectory, Mr. Durant met me. "Is you see her?"

"Every day. She is very ill, and the complaint is very fearful. Till it is seen, it can hardly be improved."

"Not in the least; and if I am sure by each of it, it would be two of the beds at Overland, where there have been very bad cases."

"Is Miss Meyer coming?"

"I hear nothing about it. He could do no good, and it is not surprising that he says any. Madame Meyer seems an excellent nurse, she is so calm and undervalued. I pity poor Philip now. He sits solitary in that old dark library, and the days pass away slowly. But his conscience haunts him. What a fine fellow he is!" Mr. Durant exclaimed.

"Oh, I am so glad you have found out how good he is! I am sure he would have been so very patient and uncomplaining."

"He misses your visits very much," Mr. Durant replied. "But it is to be some time before it will be safe for you to go to Overland."

"Why is it safe for you, then?" I asked quickly.

"I have been vaccinated,"

"I have been vaccinated,"

"Why should I be afraid. The path of duty is always safe. But come," he said briskly, "I am going to call on Lady Smith, and try to persuade her to set up a new desk of her *Prison Magazine* for the Library. I am trying to get something well so instructive literature."

"No say that. Fifty years ago the *Prison Magazine* was considered a perfect wonder of eloquence, and you, I compared with one of the penny periodicals of these days, as if it were a child's dimming head. And the old woodcuts in the *Children's*

When the Tide Turned.

By EDNA MARRALL.

Author of "Daydreams," "Little and Good," "Life's Alibi," &c. &c.

CHAPTER X.

THE BOY.

LL LOBLE as to Adelaide Meyer's illness vanished the next day.

Mr. Baker called to Crowhurst, for the letter, came, my visits to Crowhurst, for Adelaide had, sickened with the dread disease—small-pox.

The next night a patient in Clifton, and the road to Overland was shunned.

My father and he should set the example of vaccination in the parish, and ordered the whole household to submit to it. My father carried his point with me and with Christopher, and Tom was quite ready to bare his arm to the lance, but Abigail, after stoutly resisting and paying a few vulgar abuse things, which made Mr. Baker laugh, ended by throwing her arms over her head and bursting into tears.

We heard that from Mr. Baker of Adelaide. "She was very dangerously ill, and on the 15th of October—her wedding-day—but little hope was entertained of her recovery."

A doctor was summoned from London to consult with Mr. Baker, and their report was that everything depended upon the patient's strength holding out while this fearful disease ran its course.

"Will she be much recovered if she lives?" I asked Mr. Baker.

He shook his head and said—

"I fear the worst."

Miss Goodlake sent for me one afternoon, at she sometimes did to have a little gossip, and, talking over the whole affair, said—

"Did you ever hear the like of the little room keeping well out of the way? Well, you would have thought he would have come over from Holland before a day had passed. I can't understand it."

"I can," I said. "I expect Mr. Meyer is horribly afraid of infection."

He is a very fine man, my dear. Miss Adelaide introduced me to him very prettily in the church-yard one day. I thought he was a handsome fellow, not get every day to Crowhurst. It is not necessary,

CHAPTER XI.

CHANGED.

It was a cold, bright day, early in December, when I once more turned in at the white gates, and passed under the fir trees of Crowhurst.

Mr. Baker had declared it safe for me to go to the house, and I was only too glad to see Philip again.

He was in his old cover, but he rose to greet me with a light in his face.

"Your illness has been such a dreary time, I am glad you are come at last."

"And I am so glad to come. How is poor Adelaide?"

"I have not seen her, but Hans Meyer has been sick and raked his precious life by spending her through the hospital."

"And as he said that an 'invariable' girl, he did not see much use in remaining here. He went to hospital yesterday."

"I suppose she is very much altered?" I said.

"Demina thinks no one would know who she was," Philip said with a sigh. "It is very sad for she lived on an island, and pretty and amusing, and now she will have to content to be loved for herself and not for her face."

"I suppose she will never do that!" I exclaimed, and then I desisted myself, adding, "It is wrong to judge him."

"He will hold to his engagement, I think," Philip said, for weightier reasons. "You know what my

REPRODUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL COPY IN THE
 PUBLIC COLLECTION OF THE
 NATIONAL ARCHIVES
 WINDSOR, GREAT BRITAIN

