

ILLUSTRATED BY
JILL DE HAAN &
RACHEL McNAUGHTON

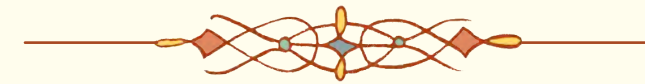
One Kind's Feet ON High Places

AN ENGAGING
VISUAL JOURNEY

by HANNAH
HURNARD



Preface to the Allegory



One morning during the daily Bible reading on our mission compound in Palestine, our little Arab nurse read from *Daily Light* a quotation from the Song of Songs, "The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills" (Song of Solomon 2:8). When asked what the verse meant, she looked up with a happy smile of understanding and said, "It means there are no obstacles which our Savior's love cannot overcome, and that to him, mountains of difficulty are as easy as an asphalt road!"

From the garden at the back of the mission house at the foot of Mount Gerizim we could often watch the gazelles bounding up the mountainside, leaping from rock to rock with extraordinary grace and agility. Their motion was one of the most beautiful examples of exultant and

apparently effortless ease in surmounting obstacles which I have ever seen.

How deeply we who love the Lord of Love and desire to follow him long for the power to surmount all difficulties and tests and conflicts in life in the same exultant and triumphant way. To learn the secret of victorious living has been the heart's desire of those who love the Lord, in every generation.

We feel we would give anything if only we could, in actual experience, live on the High Places of love and victory here on this earth and during this life—able always to react to evil, tribulation, sorrow, pain, and every wrong thing in such a way that they would be overcome and transformed into something to the praise and glory of God forever. As Christians we know, in theory at least, that

From time to time as she went about her work her heart fluttered, half with excitement, half with dread of the unknown, but whenever she remembered the thorn in her heart, she tingled from head to foot with the same mysterious sweetness. Love was for her, too, even for her, crippled little Much-Afraid. When she reached the High Places she was to lose her humiliating disfigurements and be made beautiful, and when the plant in her heart was ready to bloom she was to be loved in return. Even as she thought of this, doubt mingled with the sweetness. Surely it could not possibly be true; just a beautiful dream, but not reality.

“Oh, I am afraid it won't ever happen,” she would say to herself, and then, when she thought of the Shepherd, her heart quickened again and she would run to the door or window to see if he were coming to call her.

The morning wore on and still he had not come, but just after midday something else came: an invasion by her terrible relatives. All of a sudden, before she realized what was happening, they were upon her. There was tramping of feet and a clamor of voices and then she was surrounded by a whole army of aunts and uncles and cousins. Craven, however, was not with them. The family, hearing of his reception the evening before, and realizing that she shrank

from him with peculiar dread and terror, had decided that it would not be wise to take him with them.

They were determined to overrule Much-Afraid's objections to the marriage, and if possible get her out of the cottage and into one of their own dwelling places. Their plan was to make a bold attack while she would be alone in the cottage and the Shepherd far away with his flocks, so they hoped she would be at their mercy. She could not be forcibly abducted in broad daylight; there were too many of the Shepherd's servants in the village who would instantly come to her assistance.

However, they knew Much-Afraid's timidity and weakness and they believed that, if there were enough of them present, they could cow her into consenting to go with them to the Mansion of old Lord Fearing. Then they would have her in their power.

The old Lord himself was actually with them, assuring her in a fatherly tone of voice that they had come with the kindest and friendliest intentions. He understood that she had some objections to the proposed marriage, and he wanted to have the opportunity of quietly talking them over with her, to see if he could set them at rest. It seemed to him that it was a suitable and attractive match in every way and that there must be some extraordinary

misconception in her mind which a little understanding talk together would set right. If not, he assured her kindly, he would not permit her to be married against her will.

When he had finished, a babel of other Fearing voices broke in, reasoning with her and making all sorts of suggestions. The fact was, they told her, that she had cut herself off from her relatives for so long, it was now quite apparent that she had all kinds of strange notions about their feelings and intentions toward her. It was really only right that she should now spend a little time with them and thus give them the opportunity of proving that she had misjudged and misunderstood them.

Craven might not be just as handsome and pleasing in appearance as a prince in a fairy tale, and it was true that he had, unfortunately, rather a rough manner, but that was because he had known nothing of the softening and refining influences of marriage. Certainly the responsibilities and joys of married life would quickly alter this, and would indeed effect a transformation in him. It was to be her delightful privilege to assist as principal mover in bringing about this reformation which they all so eagerly wished to see.

The whole gang talked on and on, while poor Much-Afraid sat cowering in their midst, almost too dazed to know what they were saying and suggesting. Just as they had hoped, they were gradually bringing her to a state of bewilderment and incoherent fear. It looked as though they would soon be able to persuade her that it was her duty to attempt the impossible task of trying to convert Craven Fear into something less objectionable than he really was. Suddenly there came an interruption from without.

The Fearings had carefully closed the door when they entered the cottage and even contrived to bolt it, so that Much-Afraid could not escape. Now came the distant sound of a man's voice raised in song, singing one of the

songs from the old book which Much-Afraid knew and loved so well. Then the singer himself came in view, slowly passing along the lane. It was the Chief Shepherd, already leading his flock to the watering place. The words floated in through the open window, accompanied by the soft bleating of the sheep and the scuffling of many little dusty feet as they pattered after him.

It seemed as though all other sounds were hushed to stillness on that quiet summer afternoon as the Shepherd sang while passing the cottage. Inside, the clamor of voices had ceased instantly and was succeeded by silence which could be felt. This is what he sang:



The Voice of my Beloved!
Through all my heart it thrills,
He leaps upon the mountains,
And skips upon the hills.
For like a roe or young hart,
So swift and strong is he,
He looketh through my window
And beckoneth unto me.
“Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away with me,
Gone are the snows of winter,
The rains no more we see.
“The flowers are appearing,
The little birds all sing,
The turtle dove is calling,
Through all the land 'tis spring.
“The shoots are on the grapevines,
The figs are on the tree,
Arise, my love, my fair one,
And come away with me.
“Why is my dove still hiding?
When all things else rejoice,
Oh, let me see thee, fair one,
Oh, let me hear thy voice.”

CANT. 2:8-14



FEAR & OBEDIENCE



What fear keeps you from moving forward when God asks?
How can you overcome this fear with the Lord's help?



As she sat listening in the cottage, Much-Afraid knew with a pang of agonizing pain that the Shepherd was calling her to go with him to the mountains. This was the secret signal he had promised, and he had said that she must be ready to leave instantly, the moment she heard it. Now here she was, locked inside her own cottage, beleaguered by her terrible Fears and unable to respond in any way to his call or even to give any sign of her need.

There was one moment indeed, when the song first started and everyone was startled into silence, when she might have called to him to come and help her. She did not realize that the Fearings were holding their breath lest she did call, and had she done so, they would have fled helter-skelter through the door. However, she was too stunned with fear to seize the opportunity, and then it was too late.

The next moment she felt Coward's heavy hand laid tightly over her mouth, then other hands gripped her firmly and held her in the chair. So the Shepherd slowly passed the cottage, "showing himself at the window," and singing the signal song, but receiving no response of any kind.

When he had passed and the words of the song and the bleating of the sheep had died away in the distance, it was found that Much-Afraid had fainted. Her cousin Coward's gagging hands had half-choked her. Her relatives would dearly have liked to seize this opportunity and carry her off while she was unconscious, but as this was the hour when everybody was returning from work it was too dangerous. The Fearings decided therefore that they would remain in the cottage until darkness fell, then gag Much-Afraid and carry her off unperceived.

When this plan had been decided upon, they laid her upon the bed to recover as best she might, while some of the aunts and cousins went out into the kitchen to

see what provisions for refreshing themselves might be plundered. The men sat smoking in the sitting room, and Gloomy was left to guard the half-conscious victim in the bedroom.

Gradually Much-Afraid regained her senses, and as she realized her position she nearly fainted again with horror. She dared not cry out for help, for all her neighbors would be away at their work; but were they? No, it was later than she had thought, for suddenly she heard the voice of Mrs. Valiant, her neighbor in the cottage next door. At the sound, Much-Afraid braced herself for one last desperate bid for escape.

Gloomy was quite unprepared for such a move, and before she realized what was happening, Much-Afraid sprang from the bed and shouted through the window as loudly as her fear permitted, "Valiant! Valiant! Come and help me. Come quickly. Help!"

At the sound of her first cry, Mrs. Valiant looked across the garden and caught a glimpse of Much-Afraid's white, terrified face at the window and of her hand beckoning entreatingly. The next moment the face was jerked away from view and a curtain suddenly drawn across the window. That was enough for Mrs. Valiant, whose name described her exactly. She hurried straight across to her neighbor's cottage and tried the door, but finding it locked, she looked in through a window and saw the room full of Much-Afraid's relatives.

Mrs. Valiant was not the sort of person to be the least intimidated by what she called, "a pack of idle Fears." Thrusting her face right in through the window, she cried in a threatening voice. "Out of this house you go, this minute, every one of you. If you have not



This saying seemed very mysterious and strange, but now that her ears had been opened to understand the water song, she heard it repeated over and over again by all the little streams which crossed their pathway or ran beside it. It seemed, too, that the wild flowers were also singing the same sort of song, only in yet another language, a color language, which, like the water tongue, could only be understood by the heart and not by the mind. They seemed to have a little chorus all their own which thousands upon thousands of them were singing in different color notes.

*This is the law by which we live—
It is so sweet to give and give.*



After that it seemed to Much-Afraid that all the little birds were chirping and trilling and liting a tiny theme song also, with unnumbered variations, but still with one chorus breaking in all the time.

*This is the joy of all winged life above—
Happy it is to be able to love.*



“I never knew before,” said Much-Afraid suddenly, “that the Valley is such a beautiful place and so full of song.”

The Shepherd laughed and answered, “Only Love can really understand the music and the beauty and the joy which was planted in the heart of all created things. Have you forgotten that two days ago I planted the seed of Love in your heart? Already it has begun to make you hear and see things which you did not notice before.

“As Love grows in you, Much-Afraid, you will come to understand many things which you never dreamed of before. You will develop the gift of understanding many

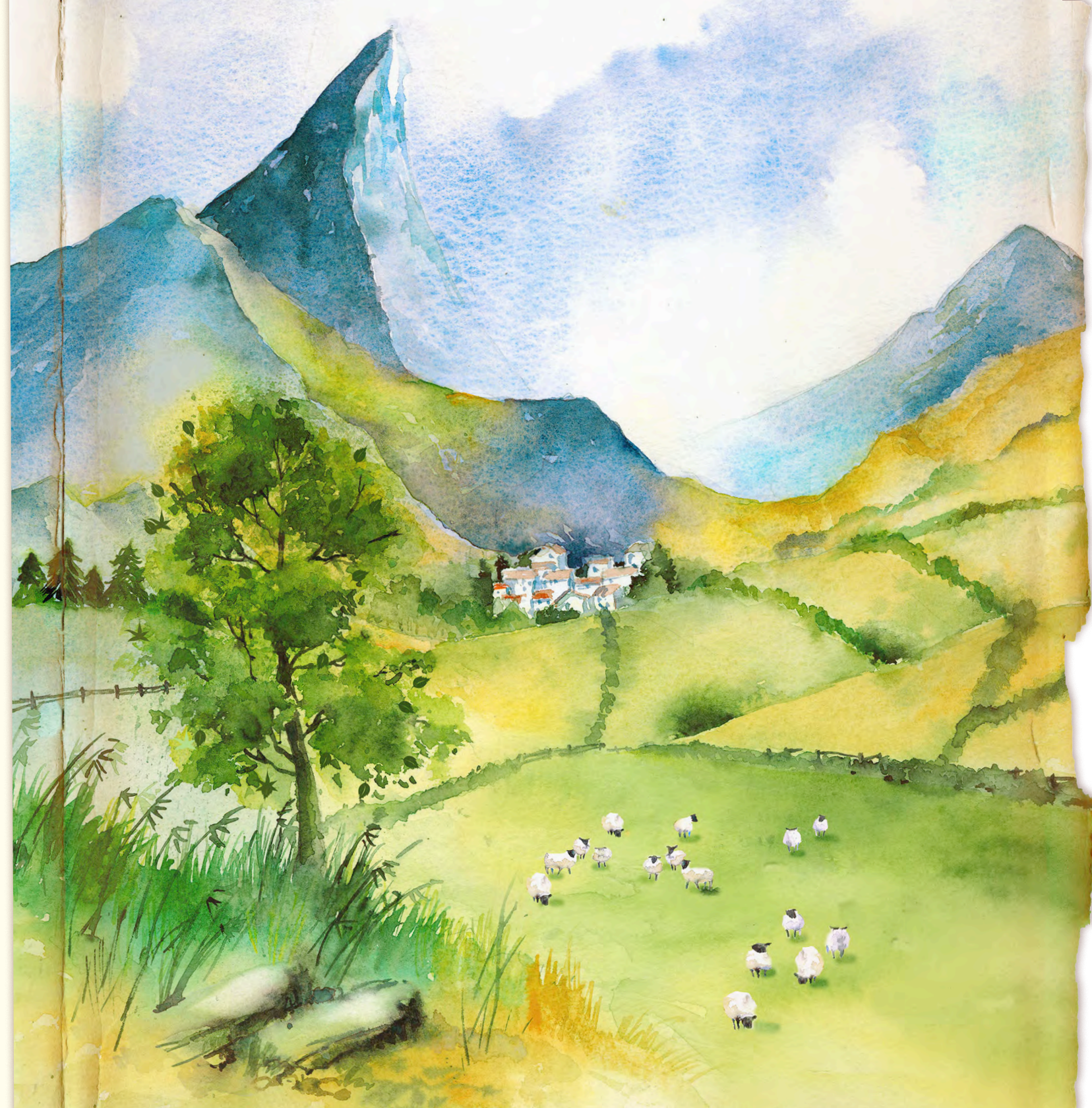
‘unknown tongues’ and you will learn to speak Love’s own language too, but first you must learn to spell out the alphabet of Love and to develop hinds’ feet. Both these things you will learn on the journey to the High Places, and now here we are at the river, and over on the other side the foothills of the mountains begin. There we shall find your two guides waiting for you.”

It was strange and wonderful indeed, thought Much-Afraid, that they had reached the river so quickly and were already approaching the mountains. Upheld by the Shepherd’s hand and supported by his strength, she had really forgotten her lameness and had been unconscious of either tiredness or weakness. Oh, if only he would take her the whole way to the mountain places, instead of giving her over to the care of other guides.

When she thought of this, she said to him imploringly, “Will you not take me all the way? When I am with you I am strong and I am sure no one else but you can get me up to the High Places.”

He looked at her most kindly, but answered quietly, “Much-Afraid, I could do what you wish. I could carry you all the way up to the High Places myself, instead of leaving you to climb there. But if I did, you would never be able to develop hinds’ feet, and become my companion and go where I go. If you will climb to the heights this once with the companions I have chosen for you, even though it may seem a very long and in some places a very difficult journey, I promise you that you will develop hinds’ feet.

“Afterwards you will be able to go with me, ‘leaping on the mountains,’ and be able to make the ascent and the descent in the twinkling of an eye. Moreover, if I carry you up to the High Places now, with only a tiny seed of Love in your heart, you will not be able to live in the Kingdom of



were scattered with broken driftwood and with great tangled masses of brown and shriveled seaweed. Nothing lived in the whole region save the sea gulls wheeling and crying overhead and the crabs scuttling across the sand into their burrows. At intervals, too, an icy wind came shrilling across the billows, stabbing sharp as a knife.

In those days Much-Afraid never let go the hands of her two companions, and it was amazing how swiftly they helped her along. Stranger still, perhaps, was the way in which Much-Afraid walked, swifter and more upright than ever before, and with scarcely a limp, for something had happened in the wilderness which had left a mark upon her for the rest of her life. It was an inner and secret mark, and no one would have noticed any difference outwardly, but all the same, a deep inner change had taken place which indicated a new stage in her life.

She had been down into Egypt and had looked upon the grinding-stones, the wheel, and the furnace, and knew that they symbolized an experience which she herself must pass through. Somehow, incredible as it was, she, Much-Afraid, had been enabled to accept the knowledge and to

acquiesce in it, and she knew within herself that with that acceptance a gulf had opened between herself and her past life, even between her past self; a gulf which could never again be closed.

She could look back across it to the green valley between the mountains and see herself there with the Shepherd's workers, feeding her little flock, cringing before her relatives and going to the pool morning and evening to keep tryst with the Shepherd. But it was looking at somebody else together, and she said to herself, "I was that woman, but am not that woman now."

She did not understand how it happened, but what the Shepherd had said had come to pass in herself, for those who go down into the furnace of Egypt and find there the flower of Acceptance come up changed and with the stamp of royalty upon them. It is true that Much-Afraid did not feel at all royal, and certainly did not as yet look it. Nevertheless, she had been stamped with the mark, and would never be the same again.

Therefore, though she went with Sorrow and Suffering day after day along the shores of the great sea of Loneliness,

she did not go cringingly or complainingly. Indeed, gradually an impossible thing seemed to be happening. A new kind of joy was springing up in her heart, and she began to find herself noticing beauties in the landscape of which until then she had been quite unconscious.

Her heart often thrilled with an inner ecstasy when she caught sight of the sun shining on the wings of the wheeling sea-gulls, making them gleam as dazzlingly white as the snow on the peaks of the far-off High Places. Even their wild, mournful cries and the moanings of the water stirred in her a sorrow which was strangely beautiful. She had the feeling that somehow, in the very far-off places, perhaps even in far-off ages, there would be a meaning found to all sorrow and an answer too fair and wonderful to be as yet understood.

Often, too, she found herself laughing aloud as she watched the antics of the funny little scuttling crabs. When the sun shone brightly, as it did at times, even the grey, dreary sea was transformed into a thing of surpassing beauty, with the light gleaming on the curving green breakers and the foaming spray and the horizon blue as a midnight sky. When the sun thus shone on the wild wastes of waters it seemed as though all their sorrows had been swallowed up in joy, and then she would whisper to herself, "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

One day they came to a place on the shore where were high cliffs and great rocks scattered all about. In this place they were to rest for a time, and while there Much-Afraid wandered off by herself. After climbing the cliff she found herself looking down into a lonely little cove completely enclosed on three sides by the cliffs and with nothing in it but driftwood and stranded seaweed. The chief impression it made upon her was its emptiness. It seemed to lie there

like an empty heart, watching and longing for the far-off tide which had receded to such a distance that it could never again return.

When, however, drawn by an urge to revisit the lonely cove, Much-Afraid went back to the same spot some hours later, all was changed. The waves were now rushing forward with the strength of a high tide urging them onward. Looking over the edge of the cliff, she saw that the cove which had been so empty was now filled to the brim. Great waves, roaring and laughing together, were pouring themselves through the narrow inlet and were leaping against the sides, irresistibly taking possession of every empty niche and crevice.

On seeing this transformation, she knelt down on the edge of the cliff and built her third altar. "O my Lord," she cried, "I thank thee for leading me here. Behold me, here I am, empty as was this little cove, but waiting thy time to be filled to the brim with the flood-tide of Love." Then she picked up a little piece of quartz and crystal which was lying on the rocky cliff and dropped it beside the other memorial stones in the little bag which she carried with her.

It was only a short time after the building of that new altar that her enemies were all upon her again. Far away in the Valley of Humiliation, her relatives had been awaiting the return of Pride with his victim, but as time passed and he did not return and Much-Afraid did not reappear it became obvious that he must have been unsuccessful in his undertaking and was too proud to admit it. They decided that reinforcements must be sent as soon as possible, before Much-Afraid could reach the really High Places and be altogether beyond their reach.

Spies were sent out, who met Pride and brought back word that Much-Afraid was nowhere on the mountains but was far away on the shores of the Sea of Loneliness.



suffocate her as she lay there in bed. She sat up, shivering with cold and with the horror of the thought. She could not bear it if he had gone and left her behind.

On the table beside her lay the old song book. Glancing down at it in the light of the lamp, she saw it was open at the page whereon was written a song about another shepherdess. She, just like herself, had failed to respond to the call of love and then found, too late, that Love had gone away.

It had always seemed to her such a sad song that she could hardly read it, but now as she read the words again in the dark loneliness of the night, it seemed as though it was the cry of her own forlorn and terrified heart.

*By night on my bed I sought him,
He whom my soul loveth so.
I sought—but I could not find him,
And now I will rise and go—
Out in the streets of the city,
And out on the broad highway;
For he whom my soul so loveth,
Hath left me and gone away.*



The page in the little song book ended there, and she did not turn the leaf. Suddenly she could bear the uncertainty no longer. She must see for herself at once if he really had gone away and left her behind. She slipped out of bed, dressed herself as quickly as her shaking fingers would permit, and then unlocked the cottage door. She, too, would go out into the street and the broad highway and would see if she could find him, would see if he had gone and left her behind, or—oh, if only it were possible—if he had waited to give her another chance.

Opening the door, she went out into the darkness. A hundred Craven Fears lurking in the lonely street could

not have deterred her at that moment, for the pain in her heart swallowed up fear and everything else and drove her forth. So in the dark hours, just before the dawn, Much-Afraid started off to look for the Shepherd.

She could not go quickly because of her lameness, but limped along the village streets toward the open fields and the sheepfolds. As she went she whispered to herself, “O Shepherd, when you said that Love and pain go together, how truly you spoke.”

Had she but known or even dimly sensed what it would be like, would she, could she, possibly have consented to let him put the thorn in her heart? It was too late now: it was there. Love was there and pain, too, and she must find the Shepherd. At last, limping and breathless, she came to the sheepfolds, still and silent in the dim starlight. One or two undershepherds were there, keeping watch over the flocks through the night, and when they heard footsteps approaching they rose up from the ground and went to meet the intruder.

“Who are you?” they challenged her in the darkness, then stared in amazement as their lanterns flashed on the white face and frightened eyes of Much-Afraid.

“Is the Chief Shepherd here?” she gasped as she leaned against the wall of the sheepfold, panting and trying to recover her breath.

“No,” said the watchman, staring at her curiously. “He left the flocks in our charge this night and gave his orders. He said that he had to make a journey to the mountains, as he often does, and did not say when he would be back.”

Much-Afraid could not speak. She moaned and pressed her hands to her heart, feeling as though it

would break. What could she do now? He was gone. He had thought that she did not want to go and had not waited for her. Then, aching with despair, as she leaned tremblingly against the wall of the fold, she remembered the Shepherd’s face and the loving-kindness of the look with which he had invited her to accompany him to the mountains.

It came to her mind that he who understood her so well, who knew all about her fears and had compassion on her, would not leave until he was quite sure that she really meant to refuse to go with him. She lifted her eyes, looked across the Valley toward the eastern mountains and the High Places. A faint streak of light was appearing in the east, and she knew that soon the sun would rise. Suddenly she remembered the last verse of the sad song which she had read, the last verse on the page which she had not waited to turn over. It came whispering into her mind just as a little bird began to sing in one of the bushes beside her.

*And then—in the dawn I saw him.
He whom my heart loveth so.
I found him, held him and told him
I never could let him go.*

(CANT. 3:1-5)



Much-Afraid ceased trembling and said to herself, “I will go to the trysting-place, and see if he is waiting for me there.” With scarcely a word to the watchmen she turned and hurried southward, over the field where Craven Fear had met her toward the sheep pool. Almost forgetting that she was lame, she sped toward the distant trees which fringed the pool.

Just as the sky turned red above the mountains, the joyous, babbling sound of cascading water reached her ears, and as she hurried forward Much-Afraid suddenly

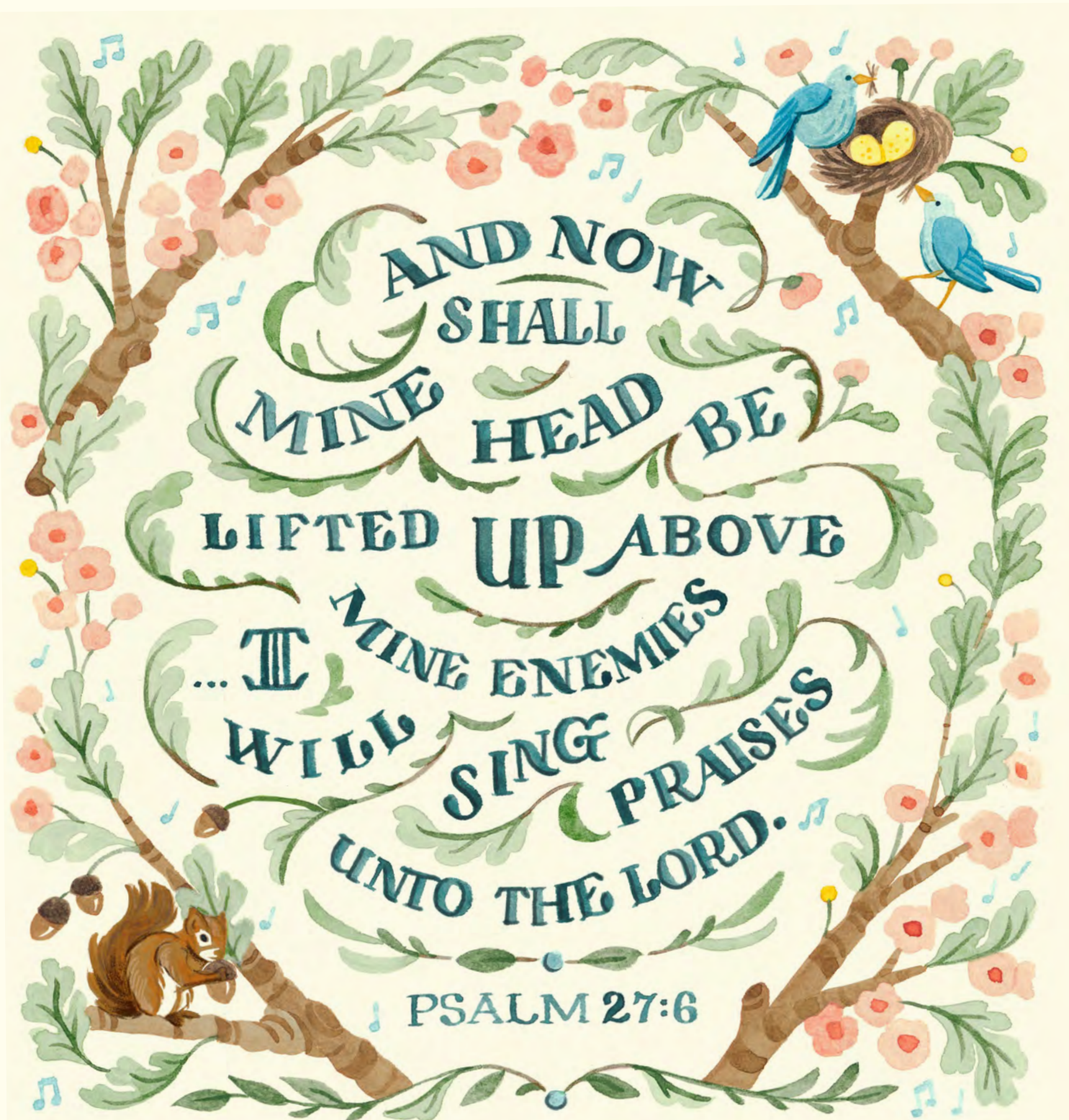
found a cascade of song pouring forth from her own heart. He was there, standing by the pool, looking toward her with the light of the sunrise shining on his face. As Much-Afraid stumbled toward him, he stepped quickly to her side and she fell at his feet sobbing, “O my Lord, take me with you as you said. Don’t leave me behind.”

“I knew you would come,” he said gently, “but Much-Afraid, why were you not at the trysting-place last evening? Did you not hear me when I passed your cottage and called? I wanted to tell you to be ready to start with me this morning at sunrise.” As he spoke the sun rose fully over the peaks of the mountains and bathed them both in a lovely golden light.

“I am here,” said Much-Afraid, still kneeling at his feet, “and I will go with you anywhere.”

Then the Shepherd took her by the hand and they started for the mountains.





of her voice, though the wind seized the sound of it and carried it off, crowned in a deafening roar of its own. What Much-Afraid was shouting up there on the old sea wall was this:

“And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about; therefore I will sing praises unto the Lord; yea I will offer the sacrifice of joy and will praise the Name of the Lord” (Psa. 27:6).

As she sang she thought to herself, “It must be really dreadful to be the Shepherd’s enemies. Always, always to find themselves frustrated. Always, always to have their prey snatched away. How simply maddening it must be to see even the silliest little weaklings set up out of reach on the High Places and made to triumph over all their enemies. It must be unbearable.”

While still on the causeway she picked up another stone as the Shepherd had taught her, this time as a memorial of his victory in making her triumph over her enemies, and dropped it into the little bag of treasured memories. So they made their way across the causeway and down the ramp on the other side and immediately found themselves in a wood.

The change in scene after their long journey through the desert was wonderful. A long-deferred spring was just loosening everything from the grip of winter, and all the trees were bursting into fairest green and the buds were swelling. In between the trees were glades of bluebells and wild anemones, and violets and primroses grew in clumps along the mossy banks. Birds sang and called to one another and rustled about, busily absorbed in nest-building.

Much-Afraid told herself that never before had she realized what the awakening from the death of winter was like. Perhaps it had needed the desert wastes to open her eyes to all this beauty, but she walked through the wood,

almost forgetting for a little that Sorrow and her sister also walked with her.

Everywhere she looked it seemed that the unfurling green on the trees and the nesting birds and the leaping squirrels and blossoming flowers were all saying the same thing, greeting one another in their own special language with a sort of ecstasy and calling cheerfully, “You see, the winter has gone at last. The delay was not unto death but for the glory of God. Never was there a fairer spring than this.”

At the same time Much-Afraid herself was conscious of a wonderful stirring in her own heart, as though something were springing up and breaking into new life there too. The feeling was so sweet, yet so mixed with pain that she hardly knew which predominated. She thought of the seed of Love which the Shepherd had planted in her heart, and half-afraid and half-eager, she looked to see if it had really taken root and was springing up. She saw a mass of leaves, and at the end of the stem a little swelling which might almost prove to be a bud.

As Much-Afraid looked at it another stab went through her heart, for she remembered the words of the Shepherd that when the plant of Love was ready to bloom she would be loved in return and would receive a new name up there on the High Places. But here she was, still far away from them, indeed farther than ever before, and with apparently no possibility of going there for a long time to come. How could the Shepherd’s promise prove true? When she thought of that her tears fell again.

You may think that Much-Afraid was altogether too much given to shedding tears, but remember that she had Sorrow for a companion and teacher. There is this to be added, that her tears were all in secret, for no one but her enemies knew about this strange journey on which she had set out. The heart knoweth its own sorrow and there



her head and worshiped. It seemed to her at that moment that all the pain and the postponement, all the sorrows and trials of the long journey she had made, were as nothing compared to the glory which shone before her. It seemed to her, too, that even her companions were smiling with her. When she had worshiped and rejoiced she rose to her feet and all three started to cross the plateau. It was amazing how quickly they went, for the path was flat and comparatively smooth, and before they could have believed it possible they found themselves approaching the mountains and were among the slopes and boulders at their very feet.

As they approached, Much-Afraid could not help



being struck by the steepness of these slopes, and the nearer they drew, the more like impassable walls the mountains appeared to become. But she told herself that when she was right up to them they would find a valley or gorge, or a pass up which they could proceed, and that she certainly would not mind how steep the way was if only it led upward. In the late afternoon they did come to the top of the lower slopes and to the very foot of the mountains. The path they were following led them right up to the foot of an impassable precipice and there stopped dead.

Much-Afraid stood still and stared. The more she looked, the more stunned she felt. Then she began to tremble and shake all over, for the whole mountain range before her, as far as she could see to the left and right, rose up in unbroken walls of rock so high that it made her giddy when she put her head back and tried to look up to the top. The cliffs completely blocked the way before her, yet the path ran right up to them, then stopped. There was no sign of a track in any other direction, and there was no way at all by which the overhanging, terrifying wall of cliff could be ascended. They would have to turn back.

Just as this overwhelming realization came to her, Suffering caught her hand and pointed to the rocky walls. A hart, followed by a hind, had appeared from among the jumbled rocks around them and were now actually beginning to ascend the precipice.

As the three stood watching, Much-Afraid turned dizzy and faint, for she saw that the hart, which was leading the way, was following what appeared to be a narrow and intensely steep track which went zigzagging across the face of the cliff. In some parts it was only a narrow ledge, in others there appeared to be rough steps, but in certain places she saw that the track apparently broke right off.

Then the hart would leap across the gap and go springing upward, always closely followed by the hind, who set

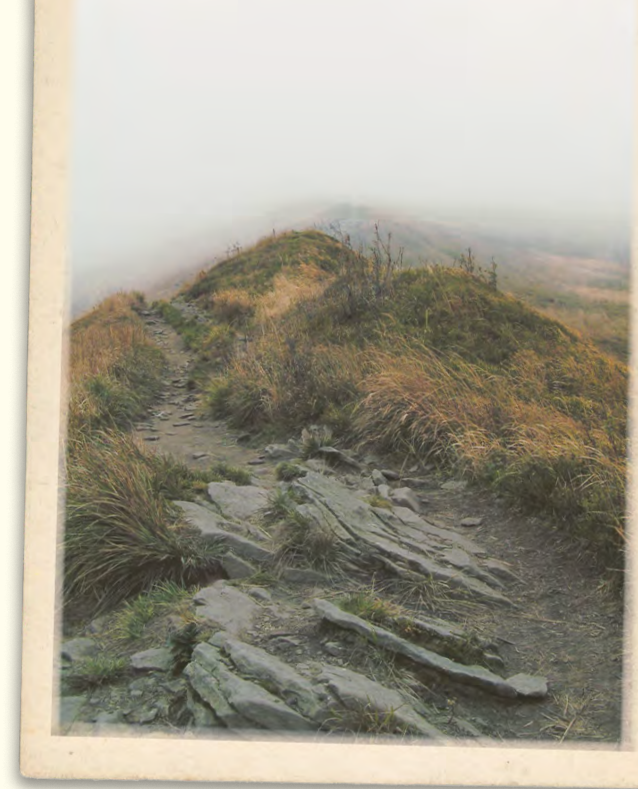
her feet exactly where his had been, and leaped after him, as lightly, as sure-footed, and apparently unafraid as it was possible for any creature to be. So the two of them leaped and sprang with perfect grace and assurance up the face of the precipice and disappeared from sight over the top.

Much-Afraid covered her face with her hands and sank down on a rock with a horror and dread in her heart such as she had never felt before. Then she felt her two companions take her hands in theirs and heard them say, "Do not be afraid, Much-Afraid, this is not a dead end after all, and we shall not have to turn back. There is a way up the face of the precipice. The hart and the hind have shown it to us quite plainly. We shall be able to follow it too and make the ascent."

"Oh, no! No!" Much-Afraid almost shrieked. "That path is utterly impossible. The deer may be able to manage it, but no human being could. I could never get up there. I would fall headlong and be broken in pieces on those awful rocks." She burst into hysterical sobbing. "It's an impossibility, an absolute impossibility. I cannot get to the High Places that way, and so can never get there at all." Her two guides tried to say something more, but she put her hands over her ears and broke into another clamor of terrified sobs. There was the Shepherd's Much-Afraid, sitting at the foot of the precipice, wringing her hands and shaking with terror, sobbing over and over again, "I can't do it; I can't. I shall never get to the High Places." Nothing less like royalty could be imagined, but far worse was to follow.

As she crouched on the ground, completely exhausted, they heard a crunching sound and a rattling of loose stones, then a voice close beside her.

"Ha, ha! My dear little cousin, we meet again at last! How do you find yourself now, Much-Afraid, in this delightfully pleasant situation?"



She opened her eyes in fresh terror and found herself looking right into the hideous face of Craven Fear himself.

"I thought somehow," he went on with a look of the most horrible gloating. "Yes, I really thought that we could come together again at last. Did you really believe, you poor little fool, that you could escape from me altogether? No, no, Much-Afraid, you are one of the Fearings, and you can't evade the truth, and what is more, you trembling little idiot, you belong to me. I have come to take you back safely and make sure that you don't wander off again."

"I won't go with you," gasped Much-Afraid, too shocked by this awful apparition to have her wits about her. "I absolutely refuse to go with you."

"Well, you can take your choice," sneered Craven. "Take a look at the precipice before you, my dear cousin. Won't you feel lovely up there! Just look where I'm pointing, Much-Afraid. See there, halfway up, where that dizzy

Much-Afraid did not hesitate one instant. In a moment she was on the rock altar herself, the next, with a flying leap, she, too, reached the ledge on the wall. Then, using the same footholds as the hart and the hind, leaping and springing in a perfect ecstasy of delight, she followed them up the cliff, the hooves of the deer ringing on the rocks before her like little silver hammers.

In a moment or two all three were at the top of the canyon, and she was leaping up the mountainside toward the peak above, from which the summons had come. The rosy light in the east brightened, the snow on the summits of the mountains caught the glow and flushed like fire, and as she skipped and jumped from rock to rock excitedly the first sunbeams streamed over the mountaintop. He was there—standing on the peak—just as she had known he would be, strong and grand and glorious in the beauty of the sunrise, holding out both hands and calling to her with a great laugh, “You—with the hinds’ feet—jump over here.”

She gave one last flying spring, caught his hands and landed beside him on the topmost peak of the mountain. Around them in every direction towered other and greater ranges of snow mountains, whose summits soared into the sky higher than her sight could follow them. He was crowned, and dressed in royal robes, just as she had seen him once before when he had carried her up to the High Places, and had touched her with the live coal from off the golden Altar of Love. Then his face had been stern in its majesty and gravity, now it was alight with glory of joy which excelled anything which she had ever imagined.

“At last,” he said, as she knelt speechless at his feet, “at last you are here and the ‘night of weeping is over and joy comes to you in the morning.’” Then, lifting her up, he continued, “This is the time when you are to receive

the fulfillment of the promises. Never am I to call you Much-Afraid again.” At that he laughed again and said, “I will write upon her a new name, the name of her God. The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psa. 84:11). “This is your new name,” he declared. “From henceforth you are Grace and Glory.”

Still she could not speak, but stood silent with joy and thanksgiving and awe and wonder.

Then he went on, “Now for the flower of Love and for the promise that when it blooms you will be loved in return.”

Grace and Glory spoke for the first time. “My Lord and King,” she said softly, “there is no flower of Love to bloom in my heart. It was burned to ashes on the altar at thy command.”

“No flower of Love?” he repeated, and laughed again so gently and joyfully that she could hardly bear it. “That is strange, Grace and Glory. How, then, did you get here? You are right on the High Places, in the Kingdom of Love itself. Open your heart and let us see what is there.”

At his word she laid bare her heart, and out came the sweetest perfume she had ever breathed and filled all the air around them with its fragrance. There in her heart was a plant whose shape and form could not be seen because it was covered all over with pure white, almost transparent blooms, from which the fragrance poured forth.

Grace and Glory gave a little gasp of wonder and thankfulness. “How did it get there, my Lord and King?” she exclaimed.

“Why, I planted it there myself,” was his laughing answer. “Surely you remember, down there by the sheep pool in the Valley of Humiliation, on the day that you





holding back of any kind. You can see that as it obeys that glorious urge the obstacles which look so terrifying are perfectly harmless, and indeed only add to the joy and glory of the movement." When he had said this, he led them back to the sunny fields, and gently told them that for the next few days they were to rest themselves there in preparation for the last part of their journey.

On hearing these words, "the last part of the journey," Much-Afraid felt almost as though she would sink to the ground with happiness. Moreover, the Shepherd himself remained there with them the whole time. Not for a single hour was he apart from them, but walked and talked with them. He taught them many things about the Kingdom to which they were going, and it was as though grace flowed from his lips and sweet ointments and spices were diffused wherever he went. How thankfully Much-Afraid would have stayed there for the rest of her life; she would have cared not more about reaching the High Places, had it not been that she still walked on crooked feet, still had a twisted mouth, still had a fearing heart.

It was not, however, that the sun always shone, even there on that borderland of the High Places. There were days of mist when all the gleaming peaks were completely blotted out by a curtain of cloud, so that if one had never seen them it would have been impossible to be sure that they really existed and were round about, quite close at hand, towering high above the mist and clouds into the clear blue sky above.

Every now and again, however, there would be a rent in the veil of mist, and then, as though framed in an open window, would appear a dazzling whiteness. For a moment one of the vanished peaks would gleam through the opening as if to say, "Be of good courage, we are all here, even though you cannot see us." Then the mist would swirl together again and the window in heaven would close.

On one such occasion the Shepherd said to Much-Afraid, "When you continue your journey there may be much mist and cloud. Perhaps it may even seem as though everything you have seen here of the High Places was just a dream, or the work of your own imagination. But you have seen reality and the mist which seems to swallow it up is the illusion.

"Believe steadfastly in what you have seen. Even if the way up to the High Places appears to be obscured and you are led to doubt whether you are following the right path, remember the promise, 'Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left.' Always go forward along the path of obedience as far as you know it until I intervene, even if it seems to be leading you where you fear I could never mean you to go.

"Remember, Much-Afraid, what you have seen before the mist blotted it out. Never doubt that the High Places are there, towering up above you, and be quite sure that whatever happens I mean to bring you up there exactly as I have promised." As he finished speaking another rent appeared in the curtain of mist, and one of the peaks of the High Places framed in blue sky shone down on them.

Before the curtain closed again Much-Afraid stooped down and picked a few of the gentians growing near her feet as a reminder of what she had seen, for, said she to herself, "These actually grew on the lower slopes of the High Places and are an earnest that though the peaks may again become invisible they are there all the time."

On the last day they stayed there the Shepherd did a very wonderful thing. He took Much-Afraid apart by herself and carried her right up to the summit of one of the High Places—in the Kingdom of Love itself. He took her to a high peak, dazzling white, uplifted like a great throne with numberless other peaks grouped round about.

and cloud that nothing was visible, they began to feel their way slowly forward and saw, looming up before them, a flat, oblong rock. On reaching it, they found it to be some kind of stone altar with the indistinct figure of someone standing behind it.

“This is the place,” said Much-Afraid quietly. “This is where I am to make my offering.” She went up to the altar and knelt down. “My Lord,” she said softly through the mist. “Will you come to me now and help me to make my burnt offering as you have commanded me?”

But for the first time on all that journey there seemed to be no answer—no answer at all—and the Shepherd did not come.

She knelt there quite alone in the cold, clammy mist, beside the desolate altar in this valley of shadow, and into her mind came the words which Bitterness had flung at her long before when she walked the shores of loneliness: “Sooner or later, when he gets you up on the wild places of the mountains he will put you on some sort of a cross and abandon you to it.”

It seemed that in a way Bitterness had been right, thought Much-Afraid to herself, only he had been too ignorant to know and she too foolish at that time to understand that in all the world only one thing really mattered, to do the will of the one she followed and loved, no matter what it involved or cost. Strangely enough, as she knelt there by the altar, seemingly abandoned at that last tremendous crisis, there was no sign or sound of the presence of her enemies.

The grave up on the mountains is at the very edge of the High Places and beyond the reach of Pride and Bitterness and Resentment and Self-Pity, yes, and of Fear too, as though she were in another world altogether, for they can never cast themselves down into that grave. She

knelt there feeling neither despair nor hope. She knew now without a shadow of doubt that there would be no Angel to call from heaven to say that the sacrifice need not be made, and this knowledge caused her neither dread nor shrinking.

She felt nothing but a great stillness in which only one desire remained, to do that which he had told her, simply because he had asked it of her. The cold, dull desolation which had filled her heart in the cave was gone completely; one flame burned there steadily, the flame of concentrated desire to do his will. Everything else had died down and fallen into ashes.

After she had waited for little and still he had not come, she put out her hand and with one final effort of failing strength grasped the natural human love and desire growing in her heart and struggled to tear them out. At the first touch it was a though anguish pierced through her every nerve and fiber, and she knew with a pang almost of despair that the roots had wound and twined and thrust themselves into every part of her being. Though she put forth all her remaining strength in the most desperate effort to wrench them out, not a single rootlet stirred.

For the first time she felt something akin to fear and panic. She was not able to do this thing which he had asked of her. Having reached the altar at last, she was powerless to obey. Turning to those who had been her guides and helpers all the way up the mountains, she asked for their help, and for them to do what she could not for herself, to tear the plant out of her heart. For the first time Suffering and Sorrow shook their heads.

“We have done all that we can for you,” they answered, “but this we cannot do.”

At that the indistinct figure behind the altar stepped

forward and said quietly, “I am the priest of this altar—I will take it out of your heart if you wish.”

Much-Afraid turned toward him instantly. “Oh, thank you,” she said. “I beg you to do so.”

He came and stood beside her, his form indistinct and blurred by the mist, and then she continued entreatingly, “I am a very great coward. I am afraid that the pain may cause me to try to resist you. Will you bind me to the altar in some way so that I cannot move? I would not like to be found struggling while the will of my Lord is done.”

There was complete silence in the cloud-filled canyon for a moment or two, then the priest answered, “It is well said. I will bind you to the altar.” Then he bound her hand and foot.

When he had finished, Much-Afraid lifted her face toward the High Places which were quite invisible and spoke quietly through the mist. “My Lord, behold me—here I am, in the place thou didst send me to—doing the thing thou didst tell me to do, for where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.” (Ruth 1:17).

Still there was silence, a silence as of the grave, for indeed she was in the grave of her own hopes and still without the promised hinds’ feet, still outside the High

Places with even the promise to be laid down on the altar. This was the place to which the long, heartbreaking journey had led her. Yet just once more before she laid it down on the altar, Much-Afraid repeated the glorious promise which had been the cause of her starting for the High Places. “The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet and he will make me to walk up on mine High Places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments” (Hab. 3:19).

The priest put forth a hand of steel, right into her heart. There was a sound of rending and tearing, and the human love, with all its myriad rootlets and fibers, came forth.

He held it for a moment and then said, “Yes, it was ripe for removal, the time had come. There is not a rootlet torn or missing.”

When he had said this he cast it down on the altar and spread his hands above it. There came a flash of fire which seemed to rend the altar; after that, nothing but ashes remained, either of the love itself, which had been so deeply planted in her heart, or of the suffering and sorrow which had been her companions on that long, strange journey. A sense of utter, overwhelming rest and peace engulfed Much-Afraid. At last, the offering had been made and there was nothing left to be done. When



you. I shall take you to the foot of the mountains myself, so that there will be no danger from your enemies. After that, two special companions I have chosen will guide and help you on all the steep and difficult places while your feet are still lame and while you can only limp and go slowly.

"You will not see me all the time, Much-Afraid, for as I told you, I shall be leaping on the mountains and skipping on the hills, and you will not at first be able to accompany me or keep up with me. That will come later. However, you must remember that as soon as you reach the slopes of the mountains there is a wonderful system of communication from end to end of the Kingdom of Love, and I shall be able to hear you whenever you speak to me. Whenever you call for help I promise to come to you at once.

"At the foot of the mountains my two servants whom I have chosen to be your guides will be waiting for you. Remember, I have chosen them myself, with great care, as the two who are most able to help you and assist you in developing hinds' feet. You will accept them with joy and allow them to be your helpers, will you not?"

"Oh, yes," she answered at once, smiling at him happily. "Of course I am quite certain that you know best and that whatever you choose is right." Then she added joyfully, "I feel as though I shall never be afraid again."

He looked very kindly at the little shepherdess who had just received the seed of Love into her heart and was preparing to go with him to the High Places, but also with full understanding. He knew her through and through, in all the intricate

labyrinth of her lonely heart, better far than she knew herself. No one understood better than he, that growing into the likeness of a new name is a long process, but he did not say this. He looked with a certain tender pity and compassion at the glowing cheeks and shining eyes which had so suddenly transformed the appearance of plain little Much-Afraid.

Then he said, "Now you may go home and make your preparations for leaving. You are not to take anything with you, only leave everything in order. Do not tell anyone about it, for a journey to the High Places needs to be a secret matter. I cannot now give you the exact time when we are to start for the mountains, but it will be soon, and you must be ready to follow me whenever I come to the cottage and call. I will give you a secret sign. I shall sing one of the Shepherd's songs as I pass the cottage, and it will contain a special message for you. When you hear it, come at once and follow me to the trysting place."

Then, as the sun had already gone down in a blaze of red and gold, and the eastern mountains were now veiled in misty mauve and grey, and the shadows were lengthening, he turned and led his flock away toward the sheepfolds.



Much-Afraid turned her face homeward, her heart full of happiness and excitement, and still feeling as though she would never be frightened again. As she started back across the fields she sang to herself one of the songs from an old book of songs which the Shepherds often used. Never before had it seemed to her so sweet, so applicable.



*"The song of Songs," the loveliest song,
The song of Love the King,
No joy on earth compares with his,
But seems a broken thing.
His Name as ointment is poured forth,
And all his lovers sing.
Draw me—I will run after thee,
Thou art my heart's one choice,
Oh, bring me to thy royal house,
To dwell there and rejoice.
There in thy presence, O my King,
To feast and hear thy voice.
Look not upon me with contempt,
Though soiled and marred I be,
The King found me—an outcast thing—
And set his love on me.
I shall be perfected by Love,
Made fair as day to see.*

CANT. 1:1-6



She walked singing across the first field and was halfway over the next when suddenly she saw Craven Fear himself coming toward her. Poor Much-Afraid; for a little while she had completely forgotten the existence of her dreadful relatives, and now here was the most dreaded and detested of them all slouching toward her. Her heart filled with a terrible panic. She looked right and left, but there was no hiding place anywhere, and besides it was all too obvious that he was actually coming to meet her, for as soon as he saw her he quickened his pace and in a moment or two was right beside her.

With a horror that sickened her very heart she heard him say, "Well, here you are at last, little Cousin Much-Afraid. So we are to be married, eh, what do you think of that?" and he pinched her, presumable in a playful manner, but viciously enough to make her gasp and bite her lips to keep back a cry of pain.

She shrank away from him and shook with terror and loathing. Unfortunately this was the worst thing she could have done, for it was always her obvious fear which encouraged him to continue tormenting her. If only she could have ignored him, he soon would have tired of teasing and of her company and would have wondered off to look for other prey. In all her life, however, Much-Afraid had never been able to ignore Fear. Now it was absolutely beyond her power to conceal the dread which she felt.

Her white face and terrified eyes immediately had the effect of stimulating Craven's desire to bait her. Here she was, alone and completely in his power. He caught hold of her, and poor Much-Afraid uttered one frenzied cry of terror and pain. At that moment Craven Fear loosed his grasp and cringed away.

The Shepherd had approached them unperceived and was standing





1

Invitation to the High Places

This is the story of how Much-Afraid escaped from her Fearing relatives and went with the Shepherd to the High Places where “perfect love casteth out fear.”

For several years Much-Afraid had been in the service of the Chief Shepherd, whose great flocks were pastured down in the Valley of Humiliation. She lived with her friends and fellow workers Mercy and Peace in a tranquil little white cottage in the village of Much-Trembling. She loved her work and desired intensely to please the Chief Shepherd, but happy as she was in most ways, she was conscious of several things which hindered her in her work and caused her much secret distress and shame.

In the first place she was a cripple, with feet so crooked that they often caused her to limp and stumble as she went about her work. She had also the very unsightly blemish of a crooked mouth which greatly disfigured both expression

and speech and was sadly conscious that these ugly blemishes must be a cause of astonishment and offense to many who knew that she was in the service of the great Shepherd.

Most earnestly she longed to be completely delivered from these shortcomings and to be made beautiful, gracious, and strong as were so many of the Shepherd’s other workers, and above all to be made like the Chief Shepherd himself. But she feared that there could be no deliverance from these two crippling disfigurements and that they must continue to mar her service always.

There was, however, another and even greater trouble in her life. She was a member of the Family of Fearings, and her relatives were scattered all over the valley, so that she could never really escape from them. An orphan, she had been brought up in the home of her aunt, poor Mrs. Dismal Forebodings, with her two cousins Gloomy and Spiteful

as though nothing can grow anywhere in all this barren waste.”

Just then she looked up at the cliffs above her head and started with surprise and delight. In a tiny crevice of the rock, where a few drops from the trickling waterfall could occasionally sprinkle it, was a single plant. It had just two or three leaves, and one fragile stem, almost hairlike in its slenderness, grew out at right angles to the wall. On the stem was one flower, blood red in color, which glowed like a lamp or flame of fire in the early rays of the sun.

Much-Afraid stared at it for some moments, noticing the wall which completely imprisoned it, the minute aperture through which it had forced its way to the light, and the barren loneliness of its surroundings. Its roots were clamped around by sheer rock, its leaves scarcely able to press outside the prison house, yet it had insisted on bursting into bloom, and was holding its little face open to the sun and burning like a flame of joy. As she looked up at it Much-Afraid asked, as she had in the desert, “What is your name, little flower, for indeed I never saw another like you.”

At that moment the sun touched the blood-red petals so that they shone more vividly than ever, and a little whisper rustled from the leaves.

“My name is ‘Bearing-the-Cost,’ but some call me ‘Forgiveness.’”

Then Much-Afraid recalled the words of the Shepherd, “On the way up the precipice you will discover the next letter in the alphabet of Love. Begin to practice it at once.”

She gazed at the little flower and said again, “Why call you that?”

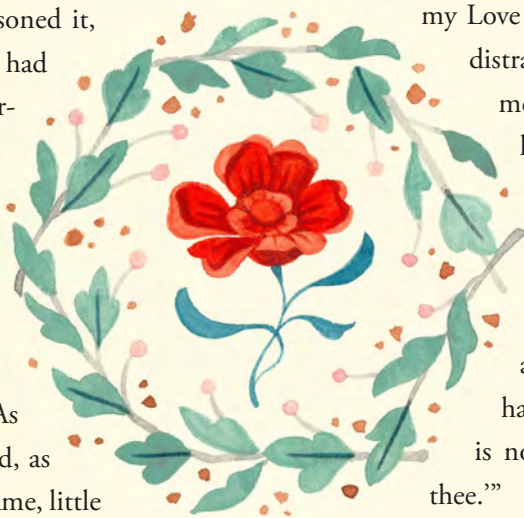
Once more, a little whispering laugh passed through the leaves, and she thought she heard them say, “I was separated from all my companions, exiled from home, carried here and imprisoned in this rock. It was not my choice, but the work of others who, when they had dropped me here, went away and left me to bear the results of what they had done.

“I have borne and have not fainted; I have not ceased to love, and Love helped me push through the crack in the rock until I could look right out onto my Love the sun

himself. See now! There is nothing whatever between my Love and my heart, nothing around to distract me from him. He shines upon me and makes me to rejoice, and has atoned to me for all that was taken from me and done against me. There is no flower in all the world more blessed or more satisfied than I, for I look up to him as a weaned child and say, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire but thee.’”

Much-Afraid looked at the glowing flame above her head, and a longing which was almost envy leaped into her heart. She knew what she must do. Kneeling on the narrow path beneath the imprisoned flower, she said, “O my Lord, behold me—I am thy little handmaiden Bearing-the-Cost.”

At that moment a fragment of the rock which imprisoned the roots of the flower above her loosened and fell at her feet. She picked it up and put it very gently with the other seven stones in her purse, then returned to the cave. Sorrow and Suffering were waiting for her with a



further supply of bread and raisins and nuts, and after they had given thanks and had eaten, they roped themselves together again and continued up the precipice.

After a little they came to a place which was very steep and slippery. Suddenly Much-Afraid had her first fall and cut herself quite badly on the pieces of jagged rock which had tripped her. It was a good thing she was so securely roped, for a great terror came upon her and she became so giddy and faint that had she not been tied she might have slipped over the edge of the path and been dashed to pieces on the rocks below. As this thought struck her she was so overcome with panic and trembling that all she could do was to crouch against the wall of rock and cry out to her companions that she was fainting and was in terror of falling.

Immediately Sorrow, who was in front, tightened the rope, then Suffering came up to her, put her arms around her and said urgently, “Drink some of the cordial which the Shepherd gave you.”

Much-Afraid was so faint and frightened that she could only lie in the arms of Suffering and gasp, “I don’t know where the bottle is—I can’t move even to fumble for it.”

Then Suffering herself put her hand into the bosom of the fainting girl, drew out the bottle, and poured a few drops between her lips. After a few moments the color returned to Much-Afraid’s cheeks, and the faintness began to pass off, but still she could not move. She took more of the Spirit of Grace and Comfort and began to feel strengthened.

Then Sorrow, who had come back to the place where she was crouching, gently shortened the rope so that Much-Afraid could take her hand and again they started to climb. In the fall, however, Much-Afraid had cut both knees so severely that she could only limp forward very

painfully, moaning continually and halting constantly. Her companions were very patient, but progress was so slow that finally it became necessary to make greater speed, or they would not reach the top of the precipice before nightfall, and there was no other cave where they could rest.

At last Suffering stooped over her and asked, “Much-Afraid, what were you doing when you left the cave this morning and went off by yourself?”

Much-Afraid gave her a startled look, then said with a painful flush, “I was looking at a flower which I had not seen before, growing in the rock by the waterfall.”

“What flower was that?” persisted Suffering very gently.

“It was the flower of Bearing-the-Cost,” replied Much-Afraid in a very low voice, “but some call it Forgiveness.” For a few moments she was silent, remembering the altar she had built and realizing that she was not practicing this new and difficult letter of the Alphabet of Love. Then said she, “I wonder if it would help my knees if we put a few drops of the cordial on them.”

“Let us try,” said Sorrow and Suffering both together. “It is an excellent suggestion.”

As they dropped a little of the cordial on both knees, almost at once the bleeding ceased, and the worst of the smart and pain died away. Her legs remained very stiff and she was still obliged to limp quite badly, but they did go forward at a much better pace. By late afternoon they were right at the top of the awful ascent, and found themselves in a forest of young pine trees with moss and blueberries growing on the banks beside the path, and the precipice which had looked so impassable actually behind them. They sat down on one of the mossy banks in the wood to rest, then heard a voice singing quite close at hand.

left in three seconds, I shall call the Chief Shepherd. This cottage belongs to him, and won't you catch it if he finds you here."

The effect of her words was magical. The door was unbolted and thrown open and the Fearings poured out pell-mell, tumbling over one another in their haste to get away. Mrs. Valiant smiled grimly as she watched their ignominious flight. When the last one had scuttled away she went into the cottage to Much-Afraid, who seemed quite overcome with fear and distress. Little by little she learned the story of those hours of torment and the plan to kidnap the poor victim after darkness fell.

Mrs. Valiant hardly knew herself what it was to feel fear, and had just routed the whole gang of Fearings singlehanded. She felt much inclined to adopt a bracing attitude and to chide the silly girl for not standing up to her relatives at once, boldly repulsing them before they got her into their clutches. But as she looked at the white face and terrified eyes and saw the quaking body of poor Much-Afraid, she checked herself. "What is the use of saying it? She can't act upon it, poor thing; she is one of them herself and has got Fearing in the blood, and when the enemy is within you it's a poor prospect. I think no one but the Shepherd himself can really help her," she reflected.

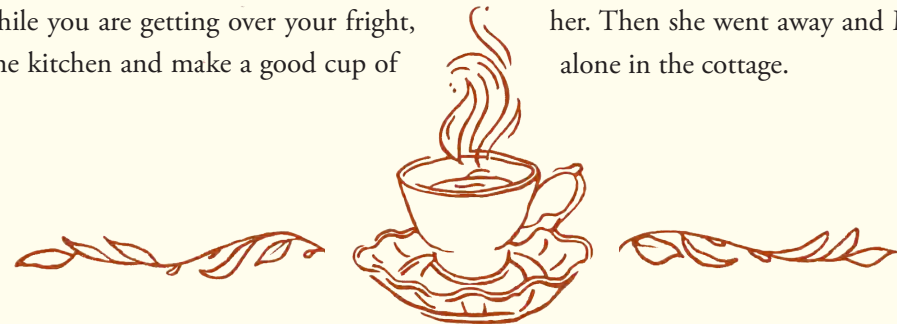
So instead of an admonition, she patted the trembling girl and said with all the kindness of her motherly heart, "Now, my dear, while you are getting over your fright, I'll just pop into the kitchen and make a good cup of

tea for both of us and you'll feel better at once. My! If they haven't been in here and put the kettle on for us," she added, as she opened the kitchen door and found the cloth already on the table and the preparations for the plundered meal which the unwanted visitors had so hastily abandoned.

"What a pack of harpies," she muttered angrily to herself, then smiled complacently as she remembered how they had fled before her.

By the time they had drunk their tea and Mrs. Valiant had energetically cleared away the last traces of the unwelcome invaders, Much-Afraid had nearly recovered her composure. Darkness had long since fallen, and now it was much too late for her to go to the pool to keep tryst with the Shepherd and explain why she had not responded to his call. She would have to wait for the morning light.

So at Mrs. Valiant's suggestion, as she was feeling utterly exhausted, she went straight to bed. Her neighbor saw her safely tucked in, and kissed her warmly and reassuringly. Indeed, she offered to sleep in the cottage herself that night, but Much-Afraid, knowing that she had a family waiting for her at home, refused the kind offer. However, before leaving, Mrs. Valiant placed a bell beside her bed and assured her that if anything alarmed her in the night she had only to ring the bell and the whole Valiant family would be over instantly to assist her. Then she went away and Much-Afraid was left alone in the cottage.



3

Flight in the Night

For hours poor Much-Afraid lay sleepless on her bed, too bruised in mind and body to rest in one position, but tossing and turning wearily from side to side until long after midnight. Somewhere at the back of her mind was a dreadful uneasiness, as though there was something she ought to remember, but was unable to do so. When at last she fell asleep this thought still haunted her.

She woke suddenly an hour or two later, her mind intensely alert, conscious of an agonizing pain such as she had never known before. The thorn in her heart was throbbing and aching in a manner she could scarcely bear. It was as though the pain was hammering out something which at first she was still too confused to be able to understand. Then, all of a sudden, in a terrible flash, it became clear to her, and she found herself whispering over and over again, "The Shepherd came and called me as he promised, but I

didn't go to him or give any answer. Supposing he thought that I had changed my mind and didn't want to go with him. Supposing he has gone and left me behind! Gone without me! Yes, left me behind!"

The shock of this thought was awful. This was the thing she had forgotten. He would not be able to understand why she had not gone out to him as he had told her.

He had urged her to be ready to go with him the instant that he called, that there must be no delay, that he himself had to go to the mountains on urgent business. She had not been able to go even to the trysting place as usual that evening.

Of course he would think that she was afraid. Perhaps he was gone already and alone. Much-Afraid turned icy cold and her teeth chattered, but it was the pain in her heart which was the most awful part of her distress. It seemed to