

she would prove to them this evening that they had not ill-bestowed their honours, that she knew how to support them with becoming dignity. It was right and fitting the other flowers should bend before the Master, but it would not be right that she should bow her head. She was above the others in rank; she must not be beheld prostrating herself together with them. No, to-day her pure white cups must boldly meet the Master's eye; and surely, she considered, would not that give Him far more pleasure than if she merely showed Him her bent outward form, which was not near so fair as her pure inmost depths? Thus, while our Lord prayed, was the evil spirit of pride and vanity reasoning within the Lily's breast.

When He had ended His petition, He rose and began to pace beneath the olive trees, His eyes resting kindly upon the flowers, who bent lowly before Him as He passed, and sent upwards their choicest, richest perfumes. Walking further He came to the spot where the Lily grew in her imperial loveliness, and as He drew nearer she stiffened her stem yet more rigidly, bore her bells more haughtily, and when Jesus stood before her, she made no movement of reverent recognition and devotion.

Now our Lord knew what was passing in the flower's heart. He felt sad and turned away a while, hoping that the Lily might yet conquer the demon within her, and bow before her Maker, to whom alone she owed her beauty. Yet no, when He resumed his gaze her crowned head was still raised upwards, and a supreme indifference to His presence spoke out of her whole bearing.

Then the Lord came closer, and stood still before the plant. He fixed His clear grey eyes in pained wonder upon her. She felt the look, it shot like lightning through her frame, but the demon of pride was active within her, and she strove to hide her emotion.

A reproving look came over the gentle face. Still no change in the upright bearing of the Lily. A pained shade passed over the clear eyes. The Lily felt her resolution wavering, though she struggled with might and main to remain in her proud posture.

"Bend thy head, Lily," whispered the other flowers, pained and grieved at this conduct. "Bend! Acknowledge thy Lord. Cause Him no grief; He has enough to bear. Bend!"

But these expostulations only made the Lily more self-willed, made her desire more than ever to display her superiority over her companions.

"I will not bend," she said half-aloud, in

petulant tones. "I will show myself to the Lord in my utmost loveliness. That is my manner of worship."

Jesus heard the words, and He advanced yet nearer. His look grew terrible in its awe-inspiring reproof and admonishment. He spoke no word, uttered no sound, but remained standing before the flower in silent reproof, His eye unremittingly fixed upon her wilful crown. Her resolution faded more and more; her pride began to waver; she felt it was a fruitless combat, endeavouring to resist the power and command enforced by those heavenly eyes looking upon her for the first time without pleasure, but full of unmixed pain.

Slowly, slowly her white bells began to tremble under the Divine glance; still more slowly she unbent their enforced rigidity, over each flower-cup spread a dark red blush of shame, tears of repentance started into her eyes, steadily and gradually each flower-cup dropped its head earthwards, and soon the hitherto proud Lily stood with drooped, flame-coloured bells, and sorrowful mien before the Lord.

He had observed the whole change—the fleeing forth of the evil spirit, the repentance, the act of remorse. He removed His fearful glance from the flower, and a milder expression returned to His gentle visage.

"Rest in peace, Lily. Sin no more," He said, and passed on.

When He had left the garden the other flowers raised themselves from their pendant posture, and all of them assailed the Lily with reproaches.

"How couldst thou dare to be so proud?" they said. "Knowest thou not 'tis a fearful sin? Oh thou whom we had crowned our empress to-day, how couldst thou shame us thus before the Lord of Life, when just because of thy high estate thou oughtest to have been the first to humble thy head?"

Many of the flowers wept bitter tears, and could speak no further for sobs.

The Lily answered not a word; she who erewhile had dared the Lord. She was cowed and humiliated, her spirit broken. Silently she bore the reproofs of her companions; silently the taunts and jeers some less delicate-minded shrubs would utter. She felt she had too well deserved all this; ay, and far, far more. She continued to hang her head, the deep blush was still unfaded on her cheeks.

As she replied by not a word, the others at length ceased their reproaches, and left her alone to her sad and bitter thoughts. The short Eastern night o'erspread the land with a veil of darkness, the moon's yellow rays