

Introduction.

This is the tale of the mutual attraction of two opposites, Dart and Althea, equally strong characters, who yet attained to a oneness in the most perfect friendship. It gives glimpses of the growth of a thirty years' relationship, fifteen lived together ideally, in sickness and in health. It tells of the harmony of the robust and energetic (a year and four months the others junior) with the delicate and languid: of the quick, lively and enthusiastic with the slow, deliberate, and undemonstrative: of the impatient with the patient: of the talkative and social with the reserved and retiring; and of many another complete contrast. Moreover, it tells of authentic miracles. Chiefly because of these, but for other things as well, this book is written.

It might well be thought that to reveal so much that is intimate in a life so reticent, would be to violate what should be held inviolable. But the contrary is the case. Others were often met afflicted in body, or distressed in mind or soul, and when Dart asked if they might be told of her experiences, Althea readily assented in order that they might, perchance, learn from them, something for their own help and comfort. So this is a book which seeks to illumine these dark and terrible days, and those sunken in the darkness of sorrow with the light that comes from the Light of Light: to stay faint hearts with the Faith that comes from the Lord of the Faith, and to restore the hopeless with the Hope that comes from man's only Hope. "This shall be her memorial."

Little can be told of the earlier years of Althea's life, other than those few details which she herself, with characteristic disparagement, told Dart when questioned about her childhood and youth. Hence, of necessity, there is an unfortunate disparity of subject matter between the two before they came together, and even later. This was due to the very full life of varied activities of the one, in contrast to that of the retirement, as much from choice as from the ill-health, of the other.

Probably few characters have developed so slowly as that of Althea. It was not till the last decade of her life, which ended on earth in her 66th year, that its singular beauty in its manifold aspects fully unfolded itself. So striking had her personality, for all its quietude, then become, that it impressed itself indelibly on all who met her, even once only. Tall, of great dignity, with shapely head, the most beautiful ears, fine fair hair dressed naturally in her own distinctive fashion: aristocratic features and a fresh colour, she became more and more attractive as she grew, but never looked, older. As the years passed, her gentle beauty was illumined by her ever-increasing sweetness of temper and purity of soul, whilst her natural humility did but stress her varied intellectual and artistic gifts. With her passing into Paradise, there went one who never failed to show those rarest of all virtues, utter selflessness and moral courage: who ever upheld in all her relationships the highest ideals of devotion, honour, loyalty, and undeviating truth: who was generous far beyond her slender means: whose never-failing exclusive love was of the tenderest, and

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who has left behind her the fragrance as of many of those flowers she tended so fondly in her beloved gardens.

When Thou rewardest the Saints, remember, O Lord, we beseech Thee, for good, those who surrounded us with holy influences, bore with us, forgave us, sacrificed themselves for us, and loved us, and in that day, shew them mercy.
