

BRONTË
CHARLOTTE

THE SEARCH
AFTER
HAPPINESS

Charlotte Brontë
The Search After Happiness

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The Search After Happiness:*

Содержание

CHAPTER THE I	5
CHAPTER THE II	8
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	10

The Search After Happiness

Preface

The persons meant by the Chief of the city and his Sons are the Duke of Wellington the Marquis of Duro and Lord Wellesly the city is the Glass town Henry O'Donell and Alexander Delancy are Captain Tarry-not-at-home and Monsieur Like-to-live-in-lonely-places

Charlotte Bronte

August the 17

1829

CHAPTER THE I

NOT many years ago there lived in a certain city a person of the name of Henry O'Donell. In figure he was tall, of a dark complexion and searching black eye, his mind was strong and unbending, his disposition unsociable and though respected by many he was loved by few. The city where he resided was very great and magnificent. It was governed by a warrior, a mighty man of valour whose deeds had resounded to the ends of the earth. This soldier had two sons who were at that time of the separate ages of six and seven years.

Henry O'Donell was a nobleman of great consequence in the city and a peculiar favourite with the governor, before whose glance his stern mind would bow and at his command O'Donell's selfwill would be overcome, and while playing with the young princes he would forget his usual sullenness of demeanour; the days of his childhood returned upon him and he would be as merry as the youngest, who was gay indeed.

One day at court, a quarrel ensued between him and another noble, words came to blows and O'Donell struck his opponent a violent blow on the left cheek. At this the military King started up and commanded O'Donell to apologize. This he immediately did, but from that hour the spell of discontent seemed to have been cast over him and he resolved to quit the city. The evening before he put this resolution into practice, he had an interview with the

King and returned quite an altered man. Before he seemed stern and intractable, now he was only meditative and sorrowful. As he was passing the inner court of the palace, he perceived the two young princes at play. He called them and they came running to him.

"I am going far from this city and shall most likely never see you again," said O'Donell.

"Where are you going?"

"I cannot tell."

"Then why do you go away from us, why do you go from your own house and lands, from this great and splendid city to you know not where?"

"Because I am not happy here."

"And if you are not happy here where you have every thing for which you can wish, do you expect to be happy when you are dying of hunger or thirst in a desert or longing for the society of men, when you are thousands of miles, of miles from any human being?"

"How do you know that that will be my case?"

"It is very likely that it will."

"And if it was, I am determined to go."

"Take this then that you may sometimes remember us when you dwell with only the wild beast of the desert or the great eagle of the mountain," said they as they each gave him a curling lock of their hair.

"Yes, I will take it my princes and I shall remember you and

the mighty warrior King your father, even when the angel of Death has stretched forth his bony arm against me and I am within the confines of his dreary kingdom, the cold damp grave," replied O'Donell, as the tears rushed to his eyes and he once more embraced the little princes and then quitted them, it might be for ever —

CHAPTER THE II

THE Dawn of the next morning found O'Donell on the summit of a high mountain which overlooked the city. He had stopped to take a farewell view of the place of his nativity. All along the eastern horizon, there was a rich glowing light, which, as it rose, gradually melted into the pale blue of the sky, in which, just over the light, there was still visible the silver crescent of the moon. In a short time the sun began to rise in golden glory casting his splendid radiance over all the face of nature and illuminating the magnificent city in the midst of which, towering in the silent grandeur, there appeared the Palace where dwelt the mighty Prince of that great and beautiful city, all around the brazen gates and massive walls of which there flowed the majestic stream of the Guadima whose banks were bordered by splendid palaces and magnificent gardens. Behind these stretching for many a league were fruitful plains and forests whose shade seemed almost impenetrable to a single ray of light, while in the distance blue mountains were seen raising their heads to the sky and forming a misty girdle to the plains of Dahomey. On the whole of this grand and beautiful prospect, [4] O'Donell's gaze was long and fixed but his last look was to the palace of the King and a tear stood in his eye as he said earnestly, "May he be preserved from all evil. May good attend him and may the chief Genie spread their broad shield of protection over

him all the time of his sojourn in this wearisome world."

Then turning round he began to descend the mountain. He pursued his way till the sun began to wax hot when he stopped and, sitting down, he took out some provisions which he had brought with him and which consisted of a few biscuits and dates. While he was eating, a tall man came up and accosted him. O'Donell requested him to sit beside him and offered him a biscuit. This he refused, and taking one out of a small bag which he carried, he sat down and they began to talk. In the course of conversation O'Donell learnt that this man's name was Alexander Delancy, that he was a native of France, and that he was engaged in the same pursuit with himself, i.e. the search of happiness. They talked for a long time and at last agreed to travel together. Then, rising, they pursued their journey. Towards nightfall they lay down in the open air and slept soundly till morning, when they again set off and thus they continued till the 3rd day, when about two hours after noon they approached an old castle which they entered and as they were examining it, they discovered a subterraneous passage, which they could not see the end of.

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