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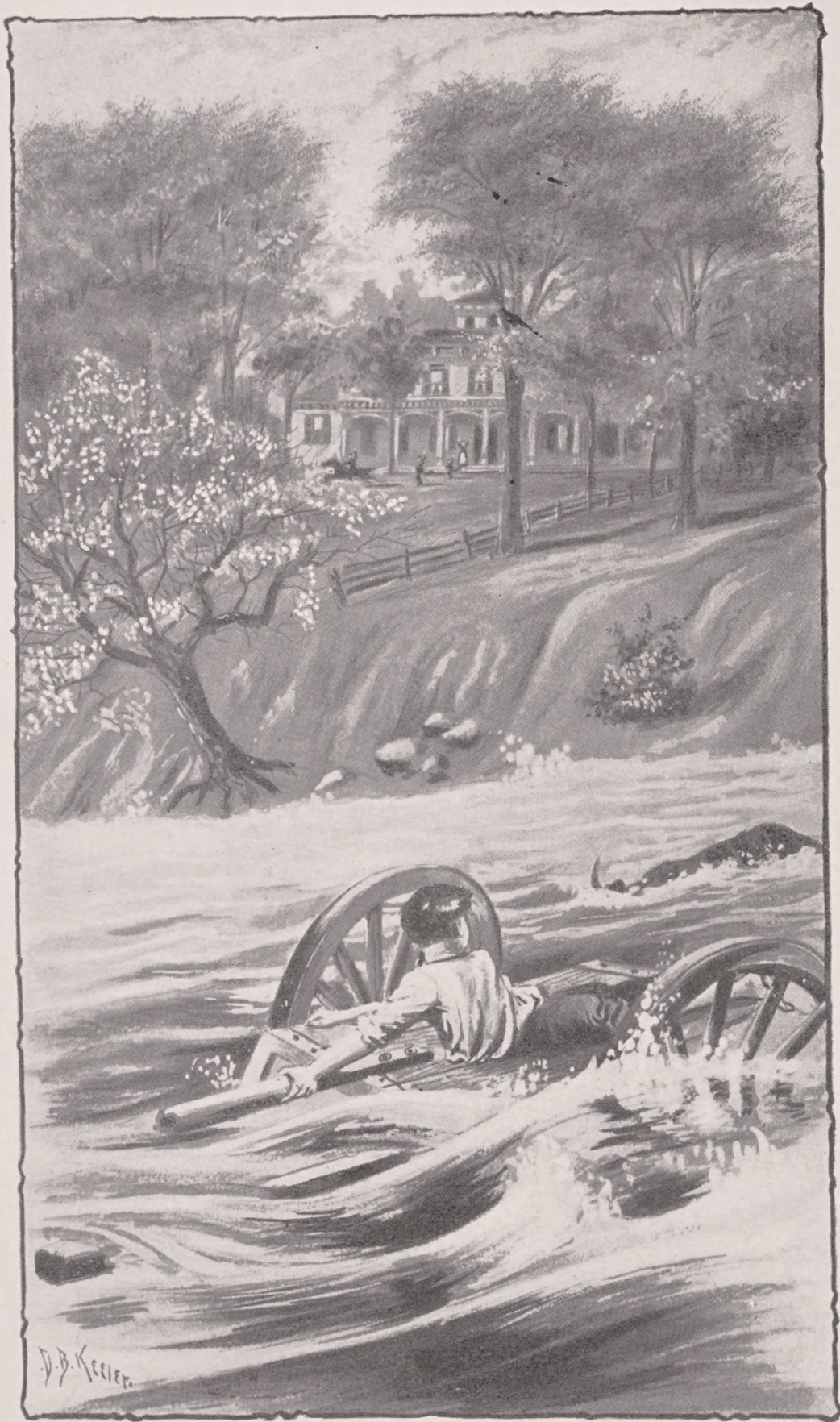
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D. B. Keeler.

THE

HOUSE ON THE BLUFF.

A WESTERN FLOOD STORY.

BY

JULIA MACNAIR WRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "ADAM'S DAUGHTERS," "ON A SNOW-BOUND TRAIN,"
"MR. GROSVENOR'S DAUGHTER," "A NEW SAMARITAN," ETC.

"Man dwells apart, though not alone;
He walks among his peers unread:
The best of thoughts which he hath known
For lack of listeners are not said."

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

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NOTE.

Two stories in this volume, the "Observer" Prize Story, "Mither's Laddie," and the story, "Sardinia Bowker's Pigs," are by Mrs. Jessie Wright Whitcomb.

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THE HOUSE ON THE BLUFF.

CHAPTER I.

THE RISING OF THE WATERS.

“The storm is past, but it hath left behind it
Ruin and desolation.”

“I CAN tell you what, Keziah: nobody seems to think of it but me, but we’re going to catch it in the spring, sure!”

“What about?” Keziah would demand, turning from moulding bread or rolling crust, stuffing a fowl, or doing other of a cook’s duties in a house where hospitality is maintained.

“About this kind of a winter,” Ezra would reply from his work—sharpening knives, cleaning shoes, mending something that was broken, doing the numberless odd jobs that fall in winter to the man of all work. “About this weather: Keziah, you don’t seem to notice things, or to consider what things mean. It’s a good happening that some one in this house looks ahead. Don’t you consider, Keziah, that all this winter

there's been something falling about every day—snow or rain? Down here it is both; but up among the mountains where the rivers rise it has been all snow and the snow is piled deep, and when the snows melt and the rains fall, I tell you, there'll be—a flood; the biggest kind of a flood. It will beat all the floods on record in these parts. Those lowlands there will be under; there'll be houses and cattle floating down the river, bridges carried off, levees cut out, and if people a-plenty do n't get drowned—well—I'll be thankful; that's all."

"If so much is going to happen, Ezra, why is it nobody knows it but you?"

"It is because people do n't think, Keziah; they do n't lay things to heart. How was it in the great flood the Bible tells about? Does n't it say 'they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day came that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away'? It will be so now. And besides, Keziah, some people do foresee it and give warning: the newspaper editors have had words about it; but nobody seems to consider; I suppose partly because no one knows how to stop it. It was that way in Noah's time, it seems. He warned them for a hundred years, and they were surprised at the last."

“I never could see any harm in the things they were doing: eating and drinking and marrying, and all that. Of course, if folks have the sense I have, and do n't get married, it is better, as says the apostle.”

“The harm, Keziah, was in their not considering and mending their ways, and turning their hearts. If the folks that are bound to be flooded out this spring would go to preparing, or those who are to be drowned would be making their peace and preparing for death, all I can say is, it would be well for them.”

“And what preparing for the flood would you advise, Ezra?” asked Keziah, who enjoyed conversation.

“Getting themselves and their possessions up high, Keziah; yes, for their worldly goods and their souls it would serve best to set themselves high. ‘Look to the hills, whence cometh your help.’ ‘Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope.’ Your ‘place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks.’ ‘In the clefts of the rock and the secret places of the stairs.’”

“Beats all, Ezra, how you can quote!”

“There's a vast deal of good reading in the Scriptures, Keziah.”

“It appears, Ezra, according to you, that we have n't anything to do about the spring flood. We are up here as high as we can get.

We 're all right. What is the use of our worrying?"

"But we 're not the only people in the world. There's a heap of mighty nice people on the levels and in the towns the water will rise over."

"I hope you wont be stirring up the Madame about it. There's no use of worrying her," said Keziah.

"The Madame don't worry; she's not that kind," said Ezra.

"Why not? She's human, is n't she?"

"Oh, yes, she's human; but there are two kinds, or three, of humans in this world."

"Perhaps you'd better run 'em over for me," sniffed Keziah.

"Certainly. There's the kind that never looks ahead for themselves and don't care for anybody else. They're easily reckoned up. Then there's the kind that carry all creation on their shoulders; fret about what they can help and what they can't help. They don't seem to realize that there's a God over all, and that he manages matters for the best and knows what he's doing. Then there's the kind that take an interest in everything, and do their very best for themselves and everybody else; use common sense to make the best of everything; see to the present and the future with a diligent hand, but

do n't fret and worry at all, because they know that the good Lord is over all and carries their burdens, hears when they pray, and brings good out of evil. That last is the kind Madame is, Keziah."

"Ain't you the master hand for considering the Madame perfection!" laughed Keziah.

"Where'd I be if it was n't for the Madame, Keziah? Died in a gutter long ago. And I do n't reckon you'd have money in the bank and be as well set up as you are if so be the Madame had n't been of the kind that care for others besides themselves."

"Well, Ezra, am I saying aught against the Madame? This household holds together and does n't say words against itself. What time may that flood be coming, since you know so much?"

"Last of March or first of April, I should say," retorted Ezra with decision. "I tell you what, Keziah, there'll be sum'at to put in the newspapers when it does come: 'The Waters are Out!' 'Forty Feet and Rising!' 'Villages Swept Away!' I can see the great black capitals same as if I was reading them out of print this minute."

"And I," said Keziah, looking into the oven with due anxiety about the welfare of certain loaves—"I can see as plain as if it was before

my two eyes this house packed from garret to cellar, and maybe overflowing into the granary. There 'll be the Danforths, and Mrs. Hastings and her children, and whoever else chooses to come; Mrs. Lyman, no doubt, and Cicely.

“Four Hastings folks and one Lyman and three Danforths, that's eight, and Robert—but we're used to him.”

“All the same, there are times when Robert Baron is equal to any half-dozen,” sighed Ezra.

“The best and sweetest child that ever lived!” flamed Keziah, taking from the oven a cunning little pie destined for Robert.

“Oh, that's true. Fact is, Keziah, I'm kind of dreading to have the little chap's parents get back from Europe. You really take the music and sunshine out of a home when you take the children out of it; let alone that they always give you opportunity to remember, ‘Whoso receiveth one such little child in My name receiveth Me.’ Now I tell you, Keziah, if this house has to take in eight extra children, and as many more grown folks, those children ought to be provided for, for children are pretty permissious in their doings sometimes. I mean to get the first floor of the granary-house all done up for a big playroom to keep the children in when the flood comes. Robert will tell me how he

likes it fixed, and there 'll be prospect of some peace for the grown folks when the house is full."

It therefore came to pass that a sudden glory rose over the soul of Master Robert Baron when Ezra took him to the granary and expounded to him the prospect of a great rising of the waters and of surrounding families flying to Madame Baron's like doves to the windows. After an hour of making and unmaking plans, of helping and hindering, Robert remembered that this delightful prospect had not been confided to his dearest friend, and rushed to find his grandmother.

"Do you know what Ezra says, grandma? He says the water is going to rise and flood the folks out down there all along the river, and they 'll all come up here—not the waters, we're too high, but the folks; and our house will be crammed full, and he is going to fix the granary for us children!"

Grandma laid down her book, contemplated her grandson, pulled the shade a little higher, and contemplated the river. The river lay far below the noble bluff on which the big Baron homestead rose with its group of outlying buildings, its hedges, and its tree-set lawns; but it was a high, muddy, turbulent river for February; the skies were overcast, and had been for

days, and there was a slow drizzle of rain. The river was still far within its banks, but Madame Baron remembered that years ago it had set back over all those lowlands where so many fair homes now stood; and she considered that one spring many of those pleasant gardens were under water, the children sat on their doorsteps and paddled in the turbid ripples of the risen river, and the church down in the valley had twice had the river up over its high front steps, over its carpet, around its organ and pulpit. Madame Baron thought gravely of these past times. Keziah was polishing some of the chandeliers, and remarked encouragingly,

“Now, Madame, I would n’t put too much faith in Ezra’s prophesying. He can’t live without talking and predicting things. Why, the snows and the rains may run out without doing a mite of harm. If there is a flood, why, it don’t show that folks will be hurt by it. It never lasts long.”

“And maybe, grandma,” chimed Robert, “it will be just like the Nile; that has to flood, and it does a lot of good, and fairly makes the land, you know. If we have a flood this spring perhaps lots of good will come of it, and—it will be such loads of fun while it lasts! Mr. Vance was reading to us about Noah’s flood, and the Nile flood, and other floods, yesterday afternoon. He

said it would be something for us to think of, if we had a flood here."

"Oh, he did, did he?" said grandma dryly. "Robert, go and tell Ezra that I shall want the carriage to go to the village as soon as dinner is over." Then Madame took a little notebook from her desk and adjourned to the store-room.

Keziah knew that she had gone to take account of provisions in prospect of entertaining her neighbors during a flood. Keziah turned to Miss Eunice, who was busy at a writing-table.

"One thing is certain: the smoke-house is full, and we have plenty of young fowls, and we'll have thirty hens laying next month. Don't you think, Miss Eunice, it would be well for me to make a firkin full of Saratoga chips, and a box or so of pepper cakes? There's some things that grow better and better for keeping."

Miss Eunice laughed. "I am sure no one will starve in this house, Keziah."

"Miss Eunice," said Keziah, polish-box in one hand and chamois leather in the other, giving each an oratorical wave as she talked, "ten years I've lived in this house, and benevolence has gone out of these doors like a constant stream: food, clothes, money, books, good

words—give, give, give, day in and day out. Some folks, if they saw an account of such giving, would say Madame would come to ruin; but she never has.”

Mrs. Ainslie, Madame’s Scotch cousin, laid down her sewing. “‘The liberal soul shall be made fat,’ Keziah,” she said. “‘The liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall stand.’ Was it not written, ‘Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him?’ Truly the Apostle speaks of the ‘riches of liberality,’ and only this morning I read this text for the day: ‘While by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men.’”

“There could n’t a word fit better for Madame and her house than that very word ‘liberal distribution.’ Seems to me, ma’am, that must be her text for every day,” said Keziah.

Thus we see that Madame Baron was at the head of an establishment like-minded with herself, and that whatever she did was right in the eyes of the rest. At present the household consisted of Madame Baron and her grandson, Robert Baron, whose parents were abroad; Mrs.

Ainslie, a cousin of Mrs. Baron—a far-off Scotch cousin, but a dear friend—who had come to spend a year with her; and Eunice Lane, daughter of a friend of Mrs. Baron. Eunice had lived at the Baron homestead since the death of her parents, five years before, a friend and companion to Madame Baron, and also a writer of verse, stories, and articles in general for papers and magazines. There were three servants; Ezra the factotum, Keziah, and Keziah's niece, Serena; while in a little cottage a field off lived Peter with his wife and daughter, who did all the extra work of the place. People said Madame Baron lived a life of ideal ease and happiness; Madame herself was ready to say, "Truly the lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage."

As Ezra predicted, ere long the river rose, and rose, and rose. Silently and slowly at first it crept up its banks, waters one day where there were rocks or shelving turf the day before. Then the bushes which had been well above the stream swayed to and fro, and their slender branches dipped and rose, timing the passing of the flood. There were three days of heavy rain in March, with warm winds blowing from the south before and after; immediately huge blocks of ice began to crowd upon each other, rocking down the torrent. The

upper sources had broken forth ; the snows on the mountains, the ice in the gullies had given way ; every stream was a river ; every river was at flood, every glen that stood rocky and dry in the summer was now a water-course, and the heaped up logs and masses of *débris* began to dash down stream as if great rafts built by genii of the hills. Here a section of fence ; yonder, some one's ice-house, or chicken-house, or pig-pen ; then some loosened wharf from the small landing places above on the river. Robert found all this exciting and delightful.

“Grandma,” he said, “after to-day I think the academy will be closed, for the little bridges are not safe, and some are gone, and maybe the big bridge wont be safe ; and Mr. Vance means to close until the boys from the other side of the river can come back, for they are half the school. Maybe the holiday will be over a week long. Trouble is, to pay for it, he wont give us Spring Holidays.”

“Mr. Vance will be lonely, shut up at the Petersons' all that time,” said Mrs. Baron. “It is not a very agreeable boarding-place for him. Robert, I will give you a note, when you start for school, inviting Mr. Vance here for the time school is closed.”

“We are going to be just like people in a siege, Ezra,” said Robert to the factotum. “The

river is the enemy and grandma's house is the big town or castle. Did you ever read about the siege of Leyden, or of Calais, or of Breda? They are in history, you know."

"I never read of 'em," said Ezra.

"But the siege of Paris, Ezra, you surely read about that; for you were a big man when it happened and all the newspapers were full of it. My father was almost my age then, and he read in the papers every day. I wish there was a siege somewhere now for me to read about."

"I should think the river would give you enough to think of now, Master Robert. I never read about the siege of Paris because I was idling, and rioting, and wasting my time, when I was a young man. May the Lord forgive me!"

"Then I suppose, Ezra, you never read about the siege of Jerusalem, by the Roman, Titus, when all the terrible things happened that the Lord foretold to the Jews."

"No, I never did. I think I should like right well to read that."

"There's a book all about it upstairs in the hall case. I'll get it for you, Ezra. What a lot of corn is in those cribs! Why don't you sell it, Ezra? We can't use so much."

"We'll see. If this rise goes on we'll have

half a dozen or more horses and cows belonging to other people here in the stalls to feed.”

Robert turned to see what promise the river gave of continuing its rise. Then he ran to the bank with a shout. A wagon-body was whirling down stream with a lad clinging to it, and not far behind it the body of an ox.

CHAPTER II.

THE GATHERING OF THE CLANS.

“ For his bounty—

There was no winter in it; an autumn 't was
That grew the more by reaping. His delights
Were dolphin-like.”

ROBERT'S shriek of horror, at the sight of a lad not much older than himself threatened with instant death in that raging muddy flood, brought out all the family. Ezra seized a coil of rope and sprang on a horse that stood nibbling at a leafless currant bush. Grasping the animal's mane and careless of saddle or bridle Ezra darted along the bank, keeping a little in-land, and Robert knew at once that he was making for the “ The Bend,” half a mile below the Baron house; a place where the current set strongly in-shore. Peter More, who was sawing wood, dashed after him across lots, and Robert, wishing that he had seven-league boots, followed at the best of his speed, keeping along the grassy edges of the paths to prevent sticking in the mud, and scrambling through wire and rail fences, until Keziah remarked when he finally came home that “ what was left of his suit was not worth looking at.”

“Have a hot blanket, Keziah, and some hot ginger tea ready,” said Madame Baron, while Eunice filled a hot-water bag and Serena ran for a bottle of liniment which was her panacea for all ills—even those of a moral kind, Miss Eunice said; for she asserted that if Serena was reproved by Mrs. Baron or Keziah she consoled herself by sniffing at this famous decoction!

Would Ezra reach the bend before the overturned wagon-body, upon the bottom of which clung the lad? Serena ran to the garret and climbed upon the roof to watch progress, and Eunice with her opera-glass betook herself to the balcony of her room.

“He’s got there! Ezra’s there!” shrieked Serena.

“He has climbed out on the big willow that leans over the river, Mrs. Ainslie. It rocks terribly with his weight; he is standing up with the rope coiled, I think; the boy is being carried in by the water sweeping around the bend. I wish Peter were there. Ezra is risking his life for that boy.”

“Peter’s there!” shrilled Serena from the house top.

“He has flung the rope across the wagon-body; he has tied something to the end of it,” explained Eunice to Mrs. Ainslie and Madame

Baron, who stood near her. "There--the boy has the rope! The boy is off the wagon and that is whirling down stream! I cannot see where he is, but Peter and Ezra have climbed down the bank; it is very high there." A pause—"Oh, I see now; they have the boy, alive or dead, and Ezra is getting on the horse, and Peter is laying the boy across the horse before him. Mrs. Baron, how intensely interested we are in the saving of this child that we never saw before—whose face and name we do not know!"

"He's alive, Keziah!" shouted Ezra as he rode up, and Keziah and Peter's wife carried the dripping, half conscious lad to the kitchen, where there was great use of hot towels, hot blankets, ginger tea, and what not.

"Here's the first of the refugees," said Keziah; "there'll be more before to-morrow night."

"The Madame made a great deal of my saving that boy, Keziah," said Ezra. "I came pretty near feeling uplifted when she made mention of it at family prayers at night. She never has appeared to think much of the way she rescued me, when my steps had well-nigh slipped and the horrible pit pretty nearly had me. The Bible makes no mention of saving a boy from drowning; maybe he'd be better dead than alive; but it does say that 'whoso

converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins'—which is the case of me and Madame."

"Ezra Perkins," said Keziah solemnly, "I sometimes think that there are people that even take it upon them to be proud of what great sinners they used to be. Now it is n't certain that because a man was a great sinner the Lord is going to make a Saul of Tarsus of him when he gets him converted." But Keziah presently felt that she had been unduly hard on Ezra, and as a token of her contrition she made him a cup of cocoa for his supper.

The next morning Robert started off for school with the invitation for Mr. Vance in his pocket. About nine o'clock Madame Baron sent for Ezra. "I think, Ezra, that the big bridge will soon be in danger from the immense drift of wreck that is coming down stream. Take the two-horse wagon, and go over to my niece, Mrs. Danforth, and tell her I cannot rest easy unless they all come over here at once. Their house, of course, cannot be carried away, but the water will soon be around it, and perhaps the lower story wet, making it very unhealthy for them. If the bridge falls we can get no news of them, and if they do not come to-day they may not be able to get across here later."

At one o'clock along the southern high road could be seen Robert Baron's sturdy little pony trotting beside the tall bay horse of Mr. Vance the schoolmaster. As Robert came in sight of the big bridge he uttered a shout of joy. "Look, Mr. Vance, look! There is Mr. Danforth coming over with all his family—Cousin Emma and the four children, and Jemima Caroline the servant! That's our big wagon, and that's Mr. Danforth's surrey behind. You never saw such a lot of fun as we're going to have! Ezra put up a little old cooking-stove in the granary, that he has turned into a playroom, and we'll be popping corn and making molasses candy all the time. Oh, say! that boy out there, trimming bushes and cleaning up the lawn, must be the one we saved from drowning yesterday."

"We are here, aunt, according to orders," said Mr. Danforth, "and very thankful to receive such orders, for there is a decided dampness down in those levels from which you called us. Still, as far as real need of refuge goes, I should think you would have sent for Mrs. Lyman and Cicely. The water in the Granite Glen is rising, and while it can never reach their house it may shut them out from getting away or any one from getting to them. And they are alone. Mr. Lyman was called to Boston last week. This flood has driven many house-

boats up the glens, and the house-boat people are a rough set."

"How wrong I have been not to think of them!" said Mrs. Baron. "As soon as dinner is over, Henry, cannot you take your surrey and go for Mrs. Lyman and Cicely?"

"Indeed I can. Nothing else will make my mind easy about them," said Mr. Danforth, as he started to help Ezra to unload from the big wagon, and carry to the storage room above the granary, an amount of luggage which they had not considered it safe to leave in the deserted home.

Robert had the four Danforths to escort to the "new playroom," and then the adventure of the afternoon before to narrate. To top all, there was "the very boy" in evidence at work on the lawn. "Come on," said Robert to Ben and Ned Danforth; "let's go hear how he got into the water. Ezra made him stay in bed this morning until I started to school. Hullo there! what's your name?"

"Alec," said the boy. "Alec Cameron."

"Why don't you come along with us to the playroom?"

"That winna do for me," said the boy. "It's a' richt for you, but I'm no sib to ony here, an' it is my duty to wark for my bite an' my sup."

"Hoo! grandma does n't care for that at all."

“Aye, mon, but I care mysel’. The Buik says, ‘He that winna work shanna eat.’ ”

“I say!” cried Robert, seized by a new thought; “wont your father and mother be awfully worried about you?”

“No,” said the boy. “I’m thinkin’ they’re better satisfied about me the noo than they waur yesterday.”

“When you were in the water?”

“No; before iver I fell intil the water.”

“Well, that *is* queer! Where are they?”

“They’re deid, an’ gaun to glory, an’ I mak sure they are thankfu’ to see me get clear o’ the pooer o’ a verra bad mon, a drinkin’ loon wha swears awfu’, God forgi’e him, gif he is leevin’!”

“How did you come to be with such a man?” cried Robert.

“Tell us how you fell in the water,” shouted Ned.

“Do you mind last May yon steamboat that burned, up the river, an’ ten passengers were lost? My mither an’ faither an’ me were on board yon, an’ they two were drooned; but a mon grippit me, an’ bein’ a rare strong young man we won to shore. So I was left all alane, not carin’ verra much about leevin’. There was a warehoose mon who said I could have wark wi’ him, an’ leeve in his hoose; so I did, an’ I went to nicht-schule, for I’m mair fond o’ study than

o' onything. It was in November I got knocked over by a big barrel in yon warehoose, an' me leg was broke, an' I was pit intil a hospital. When I could leave the hospital I was no fit for wark yet, an' as the mon I had been wi' had gone south wi' his wife, wha was a sickly body, the doctor said, 'Ye canna be rinnin' round wi' no ony home in winter time,' an' he hed me sent to the puirhoose. It's a rare disgrace to be in a puirhoose, an' I haena gotten o'er it yet. I felt as if my hairt was clean broke; for never before did I know o' a guid Cameron in ane o' they puirhooses! Mebbe ye will no want to stan' clishin' an' claverin' here wi' me, now I hae told ye the hale truth: that I hae bin in sic a low doon place as yon."

"Why, boy, it was n't your fault," said Robert, drawing a little nearer. "You were put there because you had no home and could not work. I wish you had been here! But it is over now; what are you feeling so about it for? Were they ugly to you there, I say?"

"No verra. It was the disgrace o' it maks me sair."

"Grandma would say it was no disgrace, since you had not done wrong. Tell us the rest, and don't you mind about the poorhouse any more. We do n't mind it; do we, boys?"

"Not a bit," said Ben and Ned.

“ I kep’ tryin’ to go out to a place, but few folks were wantin’ a boy not thirteen, till yesterday mornin’ along cam’ a farmer named Bolger, and he was married to the sister of the puirhoose keeper, you see ; so the keeper kent I was a guid boy to wark, an’ he wanted to favor his brither-in-law, an’ he said I must gang wi’ him. I fought hard against it, for the mon was drunk an’ swearin’ ; an’ he lookit like a bad mon all through. In spite o’ me I was made to get oup wi’ yon mon in his big wagon, an’ he hed twa bonny red oxen till it. When we left town the mon was that fou’, whoopin’ an’ singin’ an’ tellin’ hoo near he daur drive to yon bank—what does he dae but drive close to the brink, an’ doon the bank crashed with the weight o’ yon oxen an’ wagon, for the river had undermined the banks. Then we were all in the water, flounderin’ ; an’ I canna tell what happened till I foun’ myself clingin’ to the wagon bed, as it sailed awa overset ; an’ Mr. Perkins, wha pu’ed me oot, he says a drooned ox cam’ doon the stream behind me. I canna say if yon other ox an’ the mon were drooned or no. I ken the puir wickit mon was no verra fit to appear before God. Hech, laddies, I can say for mysel’, like David in the Buik, ‘ he sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of deep waters.’ ”

“ My! have n’t you had adventures!” said

Robert, half envying a boy with such a marvelous history.

"I rather no hed ony, gif it was God's will," said Alec.

"You boys!" cried Serena from the door, "you'd better hurry in and get ready for dinner."

Robert was so expeditious with his preparations that he presently made his way near to Mrs. Ainslie's chair in the sitting-room.

"Aunt Ainslie," he said in the winning tone that always captured hearts, "do you know that the boy that Ezra got out of the river is Scotch; and his name is Alec Cameron; and he speaks Scotchy, just as you can, when you want to, and as I love to hear you?"

"No! Is that so, Robert? I have been busy writing letters all the morning and have not seen the boy, except that he was busy at work on the lawn."

"He is a good boy, Aunt Ainslie; I know he is. He loves study, and he knows the Bible too, I'm sure; and his story is so pitiful." Whereupon Robert rehearsed the tale told by Alec Cameron, concluding with "and, Aunt Ainslie, his clothes are dreadful bad, and he is bigger than the rest of us boys, so we can't give him ours, and I do n't know what to do about it."

"And what am I to do about it?" asked Mrs. Ainslie.

Robert laughed, half shyly, half joyfully. "Only what you want to do, you know; and it is not begging to ask for things for other people, that need them dreadfully; is it?"

The dinner-bell rang, and Mrs. Ainslie and Robert went to the table in a particularly friendly frame of mind.

Robert noticed that Mrs. Ainslie had a little conference with Mr. Danforth before he set out to bring Mrs. Lyman and Cicely from Granite Glen; and that Mr. Danforth took a close look at Alec, who was holding the horse for him. "Alec will have some clothes when Mr. Danforth comes back," said Robert to himself, for he understood how they did things in this headquarters of benevolence where he lived.

"More people!" shouted all the boys, as Mr. Danforth returned, about five o'clock, bringing the Lymans—for Cicely was always a mistress of the revels wherever she went, and a favorite with all small boys and girls.

"More people!" cried Robert, in the very midst of supper, for his seat at table commanded a view of the driveway, and up it rolled a Tipton hack, followed by a spring wagon stored with trunks.

"It is my niece, Clara Hastings!" said Madame Baron rising from the table. "Will you all excuse me? Eunice, take my place, please."

"Is there room for us, aunt?" asked Mrs. Hastings as Madame Baron met her at the door. "If your hotel is full we will go on to Rayfield hotel."

"There is always room for more. Come in, my dear; come in, all of you. I thought, Clara, you were in New York."

"We reached home Saturday night; at least I did, with the children. Mr. Hastings has to stay in New York three weeks longer. The city seemed not to be agreeing with the two little ones, and there was so much spring work in housecleaning and sewing waiting for me that I came back. I have been too busy since Monday morning to send you even a letter; and now here I am, with nurse and four children, to impose on your hospitality!"

"You are all very welcome; but surely Tipton is not under water, Clara."

"No, only the street next the river; but, aunt, there are fears for the great reservoir: it is weak and may give way! I spent a night of terror last night, and this morning I found so many people who lived below the bluff were going out of town that I sent the children up on the bluff while I packed my most important things, and sent some to Col. Jones and brought some with me. I telegraphed Mr. Hastings that I was coming here."

“That was right,” said the Madame. “You know where you are always welcome; but I do pray you may be mistaken about the great reservoir giving way.”

“It is well, best of aunts,” said Mrs. Hastings, when she entered the great dining-room and saw the large family there gathered, “that both your heart and your home are large. But who is this stranger lad?” and she looked at a fine frank-faced boy, in a dark blue suit, who sat beside Mrs. Ainslie.

“That,” spoke up Robert, never at a loss, “is a boy we fished out of the river yesterday. His name is Alec Cameron.”

CHAPTER III.

THE LAWS OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

“ In silence
Steals on soft-handed Charity,
Tempering her gifts, that seem so free,
By time and place,
Till not a woe the world can see
But finds her grace.”

THURSDAY evening had closed over the Baron homestead with every room occupied, a bubble of childish laughter rippling out of the bed-chambers, a tripping of little bare feet through the halls, as foragers in night clothes and armed with pillows made raids on unguarded quarters. Then there were some hasty dashes by nurses, some clear enunciations of law by mothers, and at last all was quiet: the sweet, calm, sleep-angel ruled above stairs.

Down in the kitchen Keziah, Ezra and Serena were busy with dishes, and with preparations for breakfast.

“ About all you counted on are here, Keziah,” said Ezra.

“ And the flood you counted on is here too, Ezra. Hark to the rushing of that river! Yes, the house is full; but if more come—mark my

words—Madame will take them in. And more will come, I know.”

“Who will they be?” asked Serena.

“What their names are I can’t tell, Serena, but the Lord has a way of sending people to our doors.”

“If they’re his people then he honors us in sending them,” said Ezra; “for you mind, ‘I was a stranger and ye took me in.’”

“That can be said over that little Alec Cameron,” said Serena, wiping a plate. “Miss Eunice said to Madame this evening, ‘That boy is a real Kingdom-of-heavenite.’”

The next morning when all the big family at Madame Baron’s were gathered in the library, prayers being just finished, Madame Baron said, “I have some laws to lay down for you young people. A community without laws is soon mischievous and miserable. After breakfast Cicely and Mina Danforth may help Serena set the house in order; Belle and Kitty Hastings may go to the kitchen and do whatever Keziah wishes them to help her in. You boys can be set at work by Ezra. At half past nine all of you will meet Mr. Vance in this room, and he will read history or travels with you until half past eleven. The rest of the day you can play.”

“I wish you could arrange some morning work for us elders,” said Mrs. Lyman.

“I was about to propose that we should occupy the big sewing-room and see what our hands and two machines could do in preparing clothing, which we shall have large demand for when this flood has passed. I fear there will be many wrecked homes and destitute families.”

“I am glad we're not the ones to sew!” cried Robert. “I think all is going to be nice but the evening. What can we do in the evening, grandma?”

“What do you usually do in the evenings, Robert, say until nine o'clock bed-time?” said Mr. Danforth.

“It is usually the nicest part of the day. Grandma and Cousin Eunice tell me stories, or read aloud, or tell each other things that happened, really happened, and I listen; and the happenings are the best stories you ever heard in your life.”

“I should like to hear them,” said Mr. Vance.

“You have found us a way out of the evening question, Robert,” said Mr. Danforth. “Let us arrange to spend the time from tea until nine o'clock in taking turns telling stories.”

“Suppose we are not adept in that art?” said Mrs. Lyman.

“If we really cannot put our own stories into good shape we must in the course of the day take Miss Eunice into our confidence, and as

she is skilled as a story-teller she and her typewriter will get our ruder productions ready for our public."

A great clapping of hands, led off by Robert, seconded this proposition.

"To-night? Shall we begin to-night?" said Robert.

"We are not afraid of beginning on Friday. And I don't believe any of you will have a nicer story than Alec told us boys about himself."

Alec turned very red in the face and tried to hide behind Mr. Vance. "Never fear, Alec," said Madame. "You children will only need to listen and improve; you will not be called upon for any stories. We will have our tale-telling begin this very evening."

To Robert, who loved stories and conversation even better than play, the day moved rather slowly. It was a happy day, however, to all. The work and study of the morning gave zest to the games of the afternoon for the children; and as the shears and needles of the ladies made "coats and garments for the poor" they discussed plans for the mission school in Tipton, and for work among that most neglected of all classes in America, the house-boat people of the Mississippi and its confluents. Finally evening came, and Madame Baron announced that Mrs. Ainslie, as the senior, would tell the first story.

“My story,” said Mrs. Ainslie, “is called *THE BOY FROM SCOTLAND*, and for Robert’s benefit I will say at once it has no reference to Alec. When I was in Boston last fall the friend whom I visited told me this story of what had happened to her family physician, the famous Dr. MacNab. This morning I recalled this incident and wrote it down, and Eunice proposes to type-write all our tales and keep them as a memento of this time, when, in the midst of floods and fears and desolation, the good Lord has shut us in to so much that is pleasant and peaceful. Thus I begin my story.”

THE BOY FROM SCOTLAND.

“There! now I hope I will have a little peace!”

Dr. MacNab shut his office door, pulled down the curtains, leaned back in his big cushioned chair, laid his feet across the seat of another chair, reserved for patients, and closed his eyes. It was high noon: very likely he might be left in quiet for, say, half an hour. The doctor’s iron-gray hair, ruffled by hard rubbing in the region of his over-tired fifth pair of nerves, stood up like a window-brush; to the usual lines in his large-featured face were added some wrinkles of weariness. He had been up nearly all night, and since six o’clock had been hard at work,

from hospital to private patients and office cases.

“Old Crusty” many called him, from his stern, dominant face, rough voice, and sharp speech. Nevertheless he was over-crowded with patients, not only because he was a surgeon of repute, but when the poor came to him, hard-working, small-waged men and lads, widows and orphans, he soundly rated them for their “foolishness” in being injured, gave them the care for which his rich patients paid with heavy fees, and then put by the proffered pay, saying, “Leave that for next time.”

Scarcely had Dr. MacNab’s tired eyes closed when there was a knock at the office-door.

“Oh, bother!” mumbled the doctor; then, “Come in!”

When the door swung open there was a lad of fourteen, big and well-made but gaunt and weary looking, as if he had known recent hardships. A poor boy—a foreign boy; on his head was a Scotch cap or bonnet; his coarse suit was home-made, shrunken, faded; his big wrists showed below the sleeves, and thick blue knitted stockings were revealed in wrinkles between the trousers and the tops of his heavy cow-hide shoes. There were wide dark circles under the boy’s honest blue eyes, and something pathetic about the firmly-cut mouth and chin, which

suggested that he had "sighed for sorrow of heart."

The doctor took in all this at a glance, for it is part of a doctor's business to be observing.

"Well!" he said sharply—"what's broken about you? What do you need mended?"

"It's my heart that's broken, an' nane on this earth can mend that; it mun be the Lord himsel' does it. Some tell me time will cure it, but I canna believe it."

The boy advanced very slowly as he spoke: the doctor spoke sharply:

"What broke your heart? You're too young to own one!"

"I hae lost my mither--two weeks ago to-day. We were on the 'Sea Queen,' an' my mither was in one of the boats that went down."

"So!" said the doctor, becoming more interested, for the papers had been full of the affair of the "Sea Queen." "And were you on the boat that was picked up and carried to Baltimore? How came you to be parted from your mother?"

"They put the women in the boats first, sir, and when it came to the rest of us they said the boat where my mither was was o'er full, an' they wouldna let me in. It was an awfu' grief to her, to be parted; for we had nane else but ilk ither. I wish they had let me in."

"Then you'd not be here alive, but in the sea."

"I wad be in heaven with my mither, an' ithers that God took long syne." He was close to the doctor's chair now, and he laid his hand on the arm of it, looking earnestly at the doctor. "Are you my Uncle John MacNab?"

"I'm John MacNab, but I do n't know that I have any boy of your inches to call me uncle."

"I'm Norman Bruce. Were you not own brither to my gran'mither, Ailsa Graham, an' own uncle to my mither, Annie Bruce o' Paisley? Did you no get a letter fro my mither tellin' that Uncle Bruce was dead an' naething at a' was left us; an' she wad come in the 'Sea Queen' to America? Did you no?"

"No—but about three weeks ago I remember I threw a couple of sealed letters into the fire by accident, and as one went in I saw it had a foreign stamp. So you and your mother were coming to me, to be taken care of! You might have waited for an answer."

"We were no coming to be paupers," said the boy flushing. "We wad both work. As ye are a lone man, my mither thought that maybe she could pay our way by keeping hoose for ye. She kept hoose brawly. Gif you didna need her she thought your good word might get her a hoosekeepin' place. Money is plenty here, they

tell us, an' my mither wanted to give me schoolin', for I was aye set on my books. We were not meanin' to beg. I could gi'e up the books an' work, gin it was God's will."

"And what have you to show that you are Annie's son?"

"Eh? Didna I say so, the noo?"

"But that does not make it so. You may be some one else."

"Hech, sirs! But that wad be leein'! Wad I lee to win an uncle or onything else? Does no the Scripture say, 'Lee not at all'? I wad be in a bad way—to lee!"

"And you have nothing to show me? No proofs of your identity?"

"To show you, sir? Oh, yes. Mither an' I, knowin' it is sorely dangerous to go down to the sea in ships, divided a few bit keepsakes. I hae here a picture o' your sister Ailsa Graham, an' twa letters you wrote her an' my mither."

He took the little mementos from an inner pocket of his jacket. Dr. MacNab softened as he read them.

"Well, my lad--Norman, is your name?—I suppose I must shoulder my responsibilities as an uncle and take you home with me. So you want to study. What for?"

"To be a doctor," cried the boy eagerly.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "That takes many years and much money. You aim high."

"Aye. One does na' get onywhere by aiming low. But, uncle, I winna beg. I can work for you; and, sir, maybe you could lend me the money to go through the schools, and then I'd pay you back, with interest, when I was a great man like you," and he looked about the two office rooms with admiration.

"Perhaps we can manage it somehow," said the non-committal doctor. "You look as if a dinner and a new suit would be the first requirements."

"I had a roll when I left the cars. The people at Baltimore were verra good, and gave me my ticket to Boston and a bit of money besides. Uncle"—in a persuasive tone—"wad ye no like to take a girl bairn?"

"A girl child!" roared the doctor. "No! No! No!"

"She's unco pretty behaved, an' weel favored," coaxed Norman, "and only three years old; wi' no one in a' the wide world."

"A three-year-old girl! No! What next? No!"

"Didna the Lord Jesus say, 'Whoso receiveth one such little child in my name receiveth me'? Surely if you would be a faither to the

wee girlie you wad get a great blessin'! The bit bairnie canna be let perish."

"And how did you come by her, in the name of sense?"

"She was wi' her father an' mither on the 'Sea Queen.' The father was knocked overboard. The mither was in the boat wi' me, but she died; she couldna thole so much trouble. The bairn has no one to look to. Will ye no pity her?"

"I can't take up all strays. There are orphan asylums—"

"Uncle doctor, she is named Alice, yer ain mither's name."

"But I can't take up every child that happens to be named Alice. Where is the child?"

"I brought her wi' me, but I left her near the car station, wi' a braw sonsie woman, who has a little shop, to take tent o' her till I found you."

"The overseers of the poor must look after her. I can't."

Then Norman straightened himself and looked Dr. MacNab in the eyes firmly. "I'm only a boy, uncle, but I have given my word an' I canna go back fro' it. When her poor mither was deein' she said to me wad I keep the bairnie, an' be a brither to her, an' not forsake the tender bit lambie to strangers.

An' I said, 'Aye!' There was nae ither way but to promise, her deein' eyes bein' on me. I couldna go back fro' my word, for God is a God o' covenant keepin'. Gin ye will tell me where I can get wark, uncle, an' give me a good word to an employer, I mak' na doot I can 'arn bread for me an' the bit bairnie, an' maybe the braw dame will board us."

"And what about your fine plan of being a doctor?"

"I could study o' nights; and by-and-by I'd win through, no doubt. One can do all things wi' God's blessin'."

Dr. MacNab threw his arm about the boy's shoulders and drew him close. "You're the sample of boy I've been looking for this ten years for a son! Thank God you did not go down with the 'Sea Queen!' Come, Norman, first that dinner, and then the clothes, and then we will find your bairn, Alice."

"Do you mean to tak' her?" cried Norman.

"Certainly. I've been wishing for just such a pair for ten years. Now I have a son and a daughter. Who will now call John MacNab a lonely man?"

"Were you no in earnest wi' your ither words?" asked Norman.

"I was feeling your moral pulse; that was all."

At four o'clock Dr. MacNab with his nephew

and the lovely little Alice reached his house. As they stepped from the doctor's carriage the housekeeper appeared on the steps, very much excited.

"Doctor, your niece from Scotland got here this morning! Poor soul, what a way she was in! She was wrecked in the 'Sea Queen,' and was out in a boat and picked up by a vessel running into Portland. Oh, but she is worn and heart-broken, for she lost her only child—a boy, in the wreck. They were parted in the boats and—"

A kind of whirlwind, in jacket and trousers, new boots and soft hat, dashed past her and into the house, and the long-decorously-silent halls of Dr. MacNab echoed to a boy's shout, "Mither! Mither! I'm safe! Whaur are ye? Mither!"

In a minute more a fair-haired woman in an over-large black wrapper, loaned by the housekeeper, was hugging the whirlwind. And the arms and legs arrayed in Dr. MacNab's latest purchase were doing wonders of hugging and leaping, whirling, frisking, waving; while a little fluffy yellow and white creature, with big blue eyes, was tugging at black wrapper and grey trousers, crying, "Here's Allie! Hug Allie, somebodies!"

Thus it was that Dr. John MacNab sat down

to his tea-table provided with a family, and when the bell rang after tea for evening prayers no longer did the household consist merely of three servants, but his niece and the boy and girl cheated him into a dream that he had daughter and grandchildren to bless his age, and he heartily thanked God.

As Mrs. Ainslie read her story, Alec Cameron, as if compelled by the sweet accents of his native Scottice, crept nearer and nearer to the reader, until he was close beside her arm. Mr. Vance noticed that the boy's big grey eyes were full of tears, and at the close, where Norman rushes to his mother's arms, there was a sobbing catch in Alec's breath and a shaking of his shoulders as he tried hard not to break forth into crying; his lonely heart was full. As Mrs. Ainslie's voice fell into silence she heard the rapid breathing and saw the deep sadness of the little lad at her side.

"My poor mitherless bairn!" she said in a voice full of deep, tender compassion, and she put her arm about him. The impulsive Robert darted forward. "It was a beautiful story!" he exclaimed; "but if it has hurt your feelings, Alec—I wish—I wish it was n't told. Do n't feel bad, Alec—do n't—and I'll give you—yes, I will—I'll give you half my grandmother!"

Now this was a large offer for Robert, whose grandmother was the idol of his soul. Mrs. Ainslie spoke :

“I am not so happy as to be any little lad’s grandmother,” she said, “and perhaps God has sent this lovely lad to me. Alec, I will take you for my boy. You shall keep your own name, the name of honest, godly, loving parents, but you shall be my boy from this hour. Will you be a loving and obedient boy to me, and improve the advantages that God enables me to give you?”

Alec rose and spoke earnestly : “Oh, madam, yes, by the help of the good God.”

When for a few moments the children had crowded about Alec, telling him how very fortunate he was, and asking if he were not “real happy,” and the elders had assured Mrs. Ainslie of their sympathy and interest in this good work which she had undertaken, Mr. Vance said, “I am sure a blessing will follow you in this, Mrs. Ainslie. I knew a lady once who made such a choice, of mothering a little lad whom Providence put in her way in the hour of his great need, and they have been since then a happy mother and son.”

“Tell us the story,” cried Cicely Lyman. “Let it be your story for to-night. There is time for one more before nine o’clock.”

"We should be glad to hear it; and it would be very suitable, following this story and decision by Mrs. Ainslie," said Mrs. Hastings.

"I was once a reporter on a city paper," said Mr. Vance. "It was during my junior and senior years in college, and the reporting was one of the ways I took to provide for my collegiate expenses. I made a specialty of writing up touching domestic or personal incidents. This story which I shall now tell you I will repeat almost as I wrote it for my paper, adding the close as I have added it once and again when I have recited it at entertainments in elocution. A very simple study in fact it is, as you will find; but it has interested and perhaps helped others, and so I venture to offer it to you. I have called it

"ME 'N' BOSE."

A sharp bark testified to the presence of a dog in the court-room.

"Whose dog is that?" asked Justice Murray.

"Mine," said the prisoner, with aplomb, and his small brown fist gripped the hair on the dog's neck.

A curly brown-haired, brown-eyed boy; a curly brown-haired, brown-eyed dog.

"What have you been doing?" demanded the justice.

"Noffin," replied the boy with conviction.

"Vagrancy," said the big blue-coated man.

"Now, Jedge," remonstrated the prisoner, " 't aint vagrancy, nor no harm, is it, jes' to sleep in a box w'en you have to, 'long of Miss Rose bein' gone to the country an' her room locked up?"

"Did a woman leave a child of your age locked out of his home in November? How does she know that she will find you when she comes back?"

"Mebby she would n't be pertic'lar if she did n't. It does make her room sort of crowdy, me 'n' Bose; an' w'en she gives me one of her quilts, w'y, she's cold, likely. I said she need n't give me no kiver. It's warmer on her floor 'thout kiver than lyin' in boxes 'thout; an' that's 'bout the size of it."

"Where is this Miss Rose?"

"Gone to the country for her health."

"Where?"

"County Farm."

"You 'll be much better off in the House of Refuge, or the Reform School, or the Industrial Farm—"

"No, I would n't," said the prisoner emphatically. "Them's the places for bad ones. I ain't a bad one. Me 'n' Bose is all right; ain't we, Bose?"

Bose assented, waving his bushy brown tail—we had almost said vociferously, so intense was the affirmation conveyed by the action.

“We don’t do a bad thing. You sends kids that fights, an’ prigs, an’ gets biled, to them places. Me ’n’ Bose ain’t that sort; an’ we ain’t goin’!”

After this defence the officer thought best to proffer a more definite charge.

“Have you paid your dog tax? You have broken the law against letting dogs run at large.”

“I don’t have to pay dog tax, ’cause I never bought him. You see, Jedge, it was jes’ this way: I was walkin’ ’long Water Street when up comes this dog an’ puts his cold nose right into my hand, an’ my hand kinder went to patting his head; an’ we’ve been together jes’ like brothers ever since; ’cause I ain’t got no folks, an’ he ain’t. I did n’t know his name, so I called him Bose, an’ he liked it; did n’t you, Bose?”

The dog, settled upon his haunches, gave an affirmative double rap on the floor with his tail.

“The dog may go to the pound. Put the boy in a cell until the Children’s Aid Society can look after him.”

“No, no, Jedge!” shrieked the boy, great tears welling into his brown eyes, a note of agony in his voice. “No, I can’t be put from

Bose! Don't take him from me, Judge! Him an' me's all alone in the world; ain't we, Bose?"

Bose licked the face bent toward him and gave a consenting howl.

"I cannot send a dog to jail, and they wont take him at a Reform School," said the Judge.

"Then let me go to the pound with him," cried the boy eagerly. "Say I may, Judge."

"Why, boy, if you go to the pound you'll be put in the cage with the dogs and to-morrow you'd be drowned," said the Justice, smiling.

"Never mind; I wont care, so me 'n' Bose keeps together. If yer sends him off from me he'll howl orful! He wont mind drowndin' so much if you slings us in together; an' I wont mind it either, Jedge, not a mite;" his lips quivered. "It'd soon be over; an', yer see, cold weather's comin' on, an' I ain't got no folks nor no shoes, an' it's so hard to get a thing to eat. I'd hate dreadful to see Bose's bones poked through his skin." He passed his hand reflectively along Bose's shoulder, and Bose considered the situation, with his head on one side, one ear cocked up, and the other trailing down like a flag at half-mast.

"Yer see, Jedge, I tried twict to get the shekels to buy a shoe-black's kit an' make my livin'; but when I'd most got the dust some one stole it off me. Nobody dast steal from me

when Bose is 'round ; but since I had him I jes' could n't earn only our grub. We 's both pretty hungry, an' times has been orful hard ; ain't they, Jedge?"

"They 'll be harder come winter, my lad."

"I 've tried to set up for a newsboy, too. If you 'll let me 'n' Bose off mebby we 'll hev better times an' make it yet. I can't do noffin' if Bose ain't along. He don't let nobody whale me nor noffin. We 's like brothers ; ain't we, Bose?"

Bose's brown tail wagged frantically.

"How old are you?"

"I dunno ; mebby 'bout 'leven."

"Where did you come from?"

"My folks all got drowned six year back, when the flood was up the river. Some other folks brung me to the city, an' then they lit out, an'—I 've—been round, since."

"What is your name?"

"Richard."

"Richard what? What is your family name?"

The brown eyes looked fixedly into vacuity, the whole well-set-up little figure became tense in the effort to redintegrate the broken sequence of his memories and recover his lost self from the depths of his consciousness. He slowly shook his head.

"Maybe I'd better put them both in the cell

until the pound wagon comes round," said the policeman, with a sly wink at the justice.

"Yes, yes, that's right! Don't part me 'n' Bose." Bose gave a short sharp bark, as if he considered the affair well settled, rose and shook himself.

The boy's big honest brown eyes looked frankly at the disposer of his fate.

"Come, then," said the policeman.

"Good-by, Jedge. Thanky, Jedge," cried the little man cheerily, as he went off, still clinching the brown silky hair on his dog's neck.

The big officer put his double charge into a cell. It was warm and clean. The boy promptly lay down on the floor, clasped his arms under his head, and took up the thread of those slumbers broken earlier in the morning by his arrest. The dog, crouching by his side, laid his head on his master's chest, put one ear up in an attitude of expectancy, trailed the other low, as a banner in the dust, and so remained on guard, growling *sotto voce* if any one neared the half-open door.

The reporter, who had been making a telling item of "Me 'n' Bose," lounged into the street, then looked alert, and lifted his hat to Mrs. Randolph Nugent.

"I have an item here that will suit you exactly." He held forth his tablet with "Me 'n' Bose" fairly written out for the printer.

“He is asleep in there now, with his ‘brother Bose’ lying on his breast.”

Mrs. Nugent entered the police station. She paused on the door-sill with a little flush of hesitation. The Lieutenant of Police privately dropped his cigar into a box behind his desk; the Sergeant took his feet from the top of the stove, and two “blue-coats,” seemingly asleep on leather sofas, awoke and sat up.

Mrs. Randolph Nugent treated them to a smile apiece, after which largess she remarked, “I came to see that boy and dog.”

“Here they are,” said the Sergeant, pushing the cell door wider open. At sight of the blue-coat Bose gave a long, low warning note, intended to strike terror to the soul of an invader. It was a deep, continuous, interior, attenuating sound, like the last moaning of an organ when the fingers have left the keys. The Sergeant gave place to Mrs. Nugent. She illuminated Richard and Bose with a smile. Bose fell into silence, dropped the cocked-up ear, elevated the one that was at half-mast, put both in the attitude of content, rose, laid his brown throat against Mrs. Nugent’s gown, fixed his brown eyes on hers, and began a pantomime. His eyes were steadfast, his muzzle quivered, his tail moved slowly through an arc of half a circle, he breathed deeply.

Mrs. Nugent understood him; she was on terms of intimacy with dogs, cats, and small boys. She recognized the discourse of Bose as made up of explanation, petition, and assurances of high respectability. Bose saw assent in her eyes. He returned to Richard, gently sniffed at his throat, licked his ear, and laid his nose on the boy's nose. The lad sat up, alert.

Here was the wagon to take him to the pound with Bose! Then he realized the gracious presence in the doorway, rose, stood at "attention" with his hand on the dog's neck.

"I came," said Mrs. Nugent, "to ask you and Bose to make me a visit."

"All right! Come on, Bose!" said Richard, for here was a Christian who said—"and Bose." They departed under a fire of respectful smiles of relief from the representatives of the police force.

Justice Murray came in with a big silver dollar. There had been an intense pathos in that "Good-by, Jedge; thanky!" and the "Times is hard; ain't they, Jedge?" of the little man.

"I thought I'd set him up in the shoe-blackening business," he explained.

"They're gone—with Mrs. Nugent."

"Mrs. Randolph Nugent? Oh, then they're all right."

“Mornin’, ma’am; brought me another stray?”

Mrs. Nugent handed over boy and dog to a very big and dignified negro barber, splendid in white shirt, white apron, white jacket, and with an orange silk necktie pulled through an enormous ring.

“Now, my little man, you see, here’s soap, and towels and tub; you pull this out to let off the water, and you turn this on for hot, and this for cold. So go for yourself now.”

What a most delightful china tub; what delicious-smelling soap, what warm floods that cradled and soothed and made supple the wanderer’s little body! Bose, with his nose over the edge of the tub, endured as long as possible the enticing spectacle, then he flounced in with a mighty splash.

“Now we’ll go for you,” said Richard, so the brown coat was soaped and rubbed until Bose had enough of it, and leaped to the floor shaking himself.

That did not matter: the room was lined with china tiles. Bose repaired to the register and alternately warmed and shook himself as if he had taken baths all his life. Richard ran off the water from the tub; ran in more. Oh, blessed water! Every fibre of his frame was relaxed and comforted. Could he ever be cold and aching

again! Rub, snap, dive, splash, spatter! The door opened, a black hand introduced to the room a complete suit of clothes with the remark, "Dress yo'sef, youngster," and the little heap of dusty ragged exuviæ disappeared for ever. There lay an under suit of red flannel, long black hose, gray jacket and trowsers, and a red tie.

How could one boy wear so many clothes? Richard thrust his head into the hall, calling, "Ho! Mister! I dun'no how to get into two suits to onct."

The big black man had him dressed, stockings braced up, tie knotted, in short order. Then into the barber's chair, and his hair was shampooed, combed, trimmed, while a man buttoned his feet into such a pair of shoes as forced him to say, "Reg'lar swell; ain't them, Bose!"

He was in a street car with Mrs. Nugent. He felt an awful goneness; the world grew dim. Mrs. Nugent gave him a big fresh biscuit, Bose, between Richard's knees, opened wide his jaws and, as if it had been a fly, snapped down the half biscuit which Richard gave him. Richard ate his half slowly, savoring every crumb. What is half a biscuit after a twenty-four hours' fast? With two chocolate creams it sufficed to stay nature for the time, and the world brightened.

The car stopped, a door opened, Richard was left perched on the extreme edge of a plush-covered chair, Bose erect between his owner's knees. Richard surveyed the room. "Looks like a furniture store, an' a picter window, an' a china shop, an' a carpet an' curtain place, all rolled into one; do n't it, Bose?" he remarked.

Bose flapped an affirmative ear. Then Richard saw opposite him a handsome well-got-up boy, with a brown dog between his knees. Richard was sociable; he inquired affably, "What is your dog's name?"

The boy looked at him blandly, but did not speak. Bose, a natural gentleman, resented such rude silence; he gave a reproofing bark; not a loud street bark: it came from the root of his tongue, not from the root of his tail. Richard perceived that he could see that other dog bark but could not hear him. "Sho!" he said, and blushed.

Then a sudden light flashed on his mind, and he giggled, illustrating and confirming Hobbes' theory of laughter.

Mrs. Nugent came back and held out her hand. "Come to dinner, Richard. Send Bose with Mary; she will give him plenty of bread and meat."

That table! Dare he sit down? White napery, china, silver, a tall central bouquet.

Mrs. Nugent cast down her eyes and said a few soft words, not as though complaining of the dinner; oh, no; she seemed to be thanking some One who was not there.

The sight and smell of food brought back that strange goneness and dimness. On his plate stood a cup of brown, warm, enticing drink.

Mrs. Nugent said, "Drink your beef tea, Richard."

When he drank it he was so strengthened that he could eat his dinner. Yes, two dinners; for one dinner being ended straightway the maid cleared the table, gathered the crumbs up into a silver tray, and set forth—was there ever the like!—another dinner, "all the same as a baker-shop window!"

"She asked you an' me, Bose, to stop for a week; an' I tol' her I'd learned to read off'n signs, an' posters, an' sech." Thus Richard, during the first opportunity for private conference with his dog.

The week passed, and another and another, and still "Me 'n' Bose" were under the roof of Mrs. Randolph Nugent.

Over six years later a young collegian ran briskly up Mrs. Nugent's front steps one April day; a dignified dog with advanced doghood stood waiting for him.

It was the old story told to Justice Murray:

“He held up his cold nose and put it into my hand and my hand dropped down and began to pat his head.”

Then this pair, “Me 'n' Bose,” stood at “attention” waiting for a lady who was coming down the street.

“One hundred in my Latin grade, mother!”

“Yap, yap, I woof!” said Bose. All his grades were **100**.

There was a general applause when Mr. Vance finished; the strain of feelings occasioned by the incident of Mrs. Ainslie and Alec was now relieved.

“Children!” said Madame.

The clock hands pointed to nine exactly. The youthful procession began to file towards the stairs. There was a loud knocking at the side door and an inquiry-and-warning bark from the house-dog. Ezra went from the kitchen to the door, and a row of curly heads and bright eyes leaned over the balluster to investigate.

“Who is this that rides so late?” hummed Cicely.

“My good man, can I find shelter here?” said a voice. “I find the big bridge barred as unsafe, and see the water shining across the lowlands where I meant to put up. I am late, for the water has turned me back in several directions.

I am a colporter ; my name is White : Rev. Lucas White. I have my nag and buggy and a load of books at your gate."

"Come in, sir, come in ! Madame Baron will make you welcome. It has rained again and you are wet, sir. There's a wood fire in the dining-room, and the maid will bring you some hot tea. Come in. I'll look after the horse and bring in your luggage. This way. I'll go speak to the Madame and order the tea. The house is full, but there is always room here for more."

"Keziah said some more would be sure to come," said Cicely. "I wonder if this one is the last."

"Be sure not," said Robert. "Good-night all."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEVYING OF A TAX.

“That Pentecost when utterance clear
To all men shall be given;
When all can say ‘My brother’ here,
And hear ‘My son’ from heaven.”

THE next morning Ezra appointed the boys to fill the big kindling-wood box in the kitchen. Ben and Ned were to chop, and Robert to carry in. “And mind,” said Ezra, “that you make a solid full box of it, so that we will not hear any unseemly sounds of cutting and carrying wood on the Sabbath-day.”

This remark, and the sight of the kitchen, bright and neat, with Keziah and Cicely making apple-pies, caused it to appear to Robert that to sit on the edge of the wood-box and chat would be much more agreeable than to carry arm-loads of sticks.

“Let me tell you a good joke on my mamma,” he said. “Mamma hired an old black man to cut some wood, and as she is never hard on any body she let him take his time about it.”

“As you are doing now,” quoth Cicely.

“On Sunday morning, about five, mamma heard a saw going. A carpenter man had moved into a house by our back lane, and when the sawing woke up mamma she said to herself, ‘Oh my, what a pity that this is a Sabbath-breaking carpenter; doing work on Sunday!’ And she made up her mind to go during the week and invite the children to Sunday-school and the man and his wife to our church, if they did not belong anywhere else; and so she did. Next Sunday, very early, there was the sawing again. Mamma felt miserable about it, and said to herself, ‘This week I will take over a nice book or two, and some tracts about the Sabbath; and I’ll offer to lend them our religious papers. Then, if all that does not stop the Sunday work, I’ll have to speak to them about it.’ Well, next Sunday, saw, saw, saw! Papa was at home then—he had been away—and he sat up in bed and said, ‘What fellow is that working in my back yard on Sunday?’ Mamma said, ‘Oh, no one would work here Sunday; I’m so sorry that Mr. Clough does it regularly.’ ‘Clough!’ says papa, ‘not a bit of it. He is a good fellow, and I’m sure he is sound asleep this minute, unless that sawing in our yard is keeping him awake.’

“So up jumped papa, and into his gown and shoes, and went out, and there was mamma’s

old black man doing our work early Sunday, when he made sure mamma and Nurse Alling and our old Betty were all sound asleep. So we were the people who had to apologize to the neighborhood for what Ezra calls 'unseemly sounds on the Sabbath Day.' "

Cicely laughed, but Keziah said solemnly: "What kind of fairness is there, Robert, for you to sit here talking while the other boys work?"

"I'll go to work this very, very, minute," said Robert.

Just then the bell rang, and it occurred to him that it would be more fun to go to the front door than to the wood-pile. He skipped into the hall, but Ezra in the butler's pantry had already heard the summons and was before him. Robert concluded to forsake good manners and follow. Ezra threw open the door, and Robert saw a tall, well-dressed gentleman with a little black bag in his hand, while behind him, down at the bridle-path gate, appeared the head of a horse.

"I am compelled to ask hospitality here," said the stranger. "I am Mr. Tracy, and expected to preach in the church across the river. I find the bridge has a sign, 'Dangerous,' upon it, and if my eyes do not deceive me the water over there is up to the church steps. I reached

here by swimming my horse over Doe's Fork, but at the rate the water is rising I know I could not swim him back."

"I can't see how you ever got so far as the Fork, sir."

"I came on the cars to Belle Point; there the train was stopped because the bridge was gone. A man took me over the Belle branch in a skiff, and I hired a horse and came on."

"Mr. Danforth was speaking of you, sir, this very morning. He thought you would not try to come, on account of the water. Mr. Danforth, Mr. Vance, and the Rev. Mr. White are in the library, and they will be glad to see you," said Ezra.

Here Robert glided between Ezra and the guest, laughing, and stretching his arms across the door-way. "Who comes here has to pay!" he cried, leaning back, and looking up in the gentleman's face, his eyes shining and the smile which always won his way covering his face with dimples.

"Master Robert! Wont your grandmother be scandalized!" cried Ezra.

Mr. Tracy, a little surprised, smiled and said, "Of course I can pay, my little man."

"Maybe you won't want to when you know what it is," said Robert. "Every one who stays here has to tell a story, or maybe more. We

have stories every evening; the most splendid ones you ever heard."

"I am not likely," said Mr. Tracy, "to come up to a mark so high as that; but I will do my very best."

"Robert, will you have done with your nonsense and let the gentleman in, or I shall speak to the Madame!" Robert politely turned about and threw open the door of the library, while Ezra took the new visitor's bag.

That evening, when the family were all together after tea, Robert was in great anxiety lest Mr. Tracy should begin to discuss church matters with Mr. Danforth, Mr. White should join them, and all the grown people be drawn into the conversation, thus preventing the longed-for stories. Immediately he went up to Mr. Tracy and said gently, "You know you promised to pay a story—as they all do."

"But are you resolved to levy the tax on me the very first evening I am here? Would it not be better for me to know what kind of stories are to be told?"

"Last night," said Mr. Vance, "our stories fell into the line of the most beautiful of all charities—the adoption of children into childless homes. There are so many homeless little ones, and so many childless homes, that it is a pity they were not more often brought together.

Last evening we not only had the stories but we had a practical application of the principle, for Mrs. Ainsle became responsible for the little lad who sits beside her. She hopes to see him become, under her care, a good, useful and happy man."

"If you are not tired of the theme," said Mr. Tracy, "I think I can recall a fact of that kind which may bear repeating."

"It will be welcome, I know," said Mr. Vance. "We are all in the spirit of that text—'Whoso receiveth one such little child in My name receiveth Me.'"

Robert was now in the full glory of having commanded the situation: he had prevented, he thought, a long "grown-up discussion," in which he could not share, and he had assured that delight of his soul—a story. He wavered a little between sitting as close as possible to the narrator or in his usual place, as close as possible to his grandmother. Habit prevailed. He took his little chair to Madame's side and laid his hand in her lap. It was a fair picture of lovely, happy childhood and gracious age in full possession of the powers of prime. Mr. Tracy paused a moment, thinking of that "crown of glory, if found in the way of righteousness," and of those cheery calls of the Psalmist from the "border-land:" "They shall bring forth

fruit in old age ;” “ I have been young, and now am old, yet never have I seen the righteous forsaken ;” with the prayer, “ When I am old, O God, forsake me not,” and the cheering answer, “ Even to your old age, I am he.”

Then he retraced his memories for a moment, and said, “ My story is called

“ TREASURE FOUND IN A FIELD.”

“ The Crowd ” they called them in Daleton—eight boys, nearly of an age. They were always together : in the same classes at school and Sunday-school ; their families were friends ; the affair of one of “ The Crowd ” was the affair of all. “ The Crowd ” earned their own spending money. In January they began earning means for a Fourth of July celebration ; that over, they began again to earn wherewithal for Christmas festivities.

Ben Ford was the treasurer, the largest, the leader of “ The Crowd.” Slow in speech and in making up his mind, slow to wrath, lion-like when roused, endlessly resolute when his mind was once made up, honest, a very tender heart under his blunt big-boyishness—this was Ben.

In April their school had a three days’ vacation—a harvest-time for “ The Crowd.” Before and after school the boys made garden, tidied

yards, whitewashed fences for their home folks, but the three holidays were theirs by prescriptive right. They usually betook themselves to Sassafras Hill, a half-cleared high pasture land with a wood and a brook below it. There the boys dug for sassafras roots and bloodroot, made spoil of wild-cherry bark and slippery elm, and tied fresh wintergreen into dainty bunches. All this booty was sent to a druggist in the town, a dozen miles away, and the boys rejoiced in gains.

The holidays had come round, and by seven in the morning the boys were off with pails, bags, baskets, knives, towels—a jolly, uproarious crowd. Miss Betsey wondered “if ever they had a sensible thought in their heads.” Widely scattered over the broad pasture-land, the boys dug for the spicy roots interlaced under the surface. A tremendous shout from Ben rallied them to him: there was Ben, knife in hand, gazing at something on a heap of dead leaves behind a little clump of bushes. The something was a pitiful boy-baby about fourteen months old, thin, scared, dressed in a soiled old woolen frock and stockings, a red hood and a pair of broken shoes. As the boys gathered, staring, as a drove of young bullocks will stare in a circle at some small foolish thing unseen before, the poor baby’s drooping lip trembled,

tears rolled over its grimy face and terrified sobs shook its little bosom.

"Its folks must be up here hunting sassafras," cried Ned Brown, looking far and wide.

"No, sir," said Frank Bell; "we can see for three miles over the country and no one is in sight, and no one has been since we came here."

Ben Ford lifted the baby. "Don't cry," he said gently, holding it close.

"Dirty little thing! Put it down, Ben! You'll get some disease!" cried Joe Long.

"Here's a paper on its back!" said John Ray, the minister's son. "Let's see: '*Not wanted eny mor.*' Why, if someone has n't gone and left the baby! I'm glad I did n't have such cold-blooded folks as that!"

"The poor kid might have starved or frozen before it was found," said Tom Adams.

"What are you going to do with it, Ben? We are wasting a lot of time," said Luke Chase.

Ben was marching down hill, baby in arms. The boys followed him to the lunch-baskets by the brook. Ben took a towel from his basket, and after vigorous washing and rubbing, presented to view a baby with clean face, arms and feet, its garments straightened, and his own big, clean, red bandanna pinned shawl-wise about its shoulders. "Who's got a comb?"

Joe Long presented a wooden sample of the required implement, and Ben combed the baby's yellow curls.

"He! he! he! didn't know you were such a Nancy, Ben. You ought to hire out for a child's nurse," said Luke Chase.

Ben took from his basket a biscuit and a bottle of milk and fed the famished little one.

"Come along," said Luke; "this wont fetch us any money. Are we going to spend all day on this young one?"

Ben spread out his overcoat and laid the child snugly folded in it. The little creature shut its eyes with a sigh of content and the boys dispersed to their work. At noon they reassembled for lunch. Ben placed the baby between his knees and bestowed upon him a slice of buttered bread.

"Here's a cake for him," said one.

"Here's a pickle."

"Here, give him this sandwich."

"Have a piece of pie, kiddy?"

These offers were made in good faith.

"Pshaw, a baby can't eat those things," said Ben.

"How do you know what a baby can eat?" asked Tom Adams.

"I read a piece about it in a paper, and I've heard mother and grandmother talk."

"If you spend so much time on that young one you wont gather much," said Luke Chase sulkily.

"I've gathered more than you have," said Ben, flushing. "I always do. Would any of you leave the baby to die under that bush? You would n't yourself, Luke."

"Well, I'm glad I didn't find him; he is none of my business," said Luke.

"As long as he is lost and can't help himself," said John Ray, "he is all our business."

The foundling seemed unaccustomed to much care or petting. Satisfied with being fed and wrapped in Ben's coat it lay quiet while the boys renewed their gathering; and watched, unafraid, while they made bundles of bark and bunches of wintergreen. Finally it was six o'clock, and the line of march was to be formed for home.

"What are you going to do with that young-one?" demanded Luke.

"Take it along, of course," said Ben. "Did not we find a rabbit here once with a broken leg? We took it home and cured it. We took home a quail with a broken wing, and a little stray puppy. Wouldn't we do as much for a child?"

"There was some fun in those things," said Luke, "and they were easy to take care of."

“Does n't the Bible say how much more is a person worth than a sheep?” said John Ray.

The boys took up their luggage and big Ben put the baby on his shoulder. Luke Chase was out of humor and showing at his worst.

“Better have it call you ‘daddy,’ Ben. Wont folks laugh when they see you coming into town that way! I wish the youngone would begin to howl! Say, let us not call him Ben, but Nancy.”

Luke was always a bit jealous of Ben.

“I've a mind to set the kid down while I show you I've got a strong arm, Nancy or not,” said Ben scowling at Luke.

“Stop that, you two,” said John; “do you know that Ben, walking on there carrying that little thing, makes me think of the piece we sang in Sunday-school yesterday, and the verses we sung--about ‘when he findeth it, he layeth it on his shoulder, rejoicing.’”

“That's so,” said Frank Bell.

“Out on the mountains bleak and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.”

“Seems as if we and our folks were like the ‘ninety and nine that safely lay,’” said Joe Long, “and one poor little thing alone and deserted! I say, it was lucky we went up there.”

“Mighty pretty specimen of a lamb: that's all I can say,” sneered Luke.

“As far as that goes,” said Ben facing about, his eyes glowing, “we are none of us very pretty specimens, and there was n’t much in any of us but our being forlorn to bring the Shepherd to come after us.”

“It was n’t whether we were pretty specimens, it was his own goodness,” said John Ray, “and what is in my mind, boys, is that verse, ‘Whoso receiveth one such little child in my name receiveth me.’ What do you make of that?”

“Oh, I say,” shouted Tom, “I’ve got the jolliest idea! When we go out gathering, you know, it is a partnership and Ben is treasurer and we all share even; let us throw the baby into the common lot and keep him in partnership, and raise him up; and as Ben is treasurer and takes to youngsters he can have the charge, and we’ll all chip in and do the raising and providing.”

“Hur-r-r-ray!” yelled the boys. “Whoop la!”

“It will take about all the money we make,” said Luke Chase, who had not cheered.

“Might be the best spent of all we ever had,” said Joe Long thoughtfully.

“Wont cost much at first,” said Ned Brown; “we’ll all go to our mothers for some clothes, and collect plenty without any trouble. Then

there will be shoes and so on, and if Ben's mother and grandmother don't want to keep the baby we'll throw in our money and board it."

"Take all our money, and we wont have any Fourth!" suggested Luke Chase.

"Ha, ha, ha! we'll name the kid 'Fourth,' and have him instead," said Tom Adams.

"What shall we name him?" asked Ben.

A dozen names were proposed and rejected.

"Father has a book called 'Thesaurus,'" said John Ray; "he says it means Treasure. Why can't we call the baby Thesaurus? Treasure, you know: 'Treasure found in a field.'"

"Ho, ho, ho! he, he, he!" roared the boys, "what a name!" "Here, Thesaurus!" "Run, Thesaurus!" "Come, Thesaurus!" "If you don't behave you'll get a clip, Thesaurus!" "What a jaw-breaker of a name, THESAURUS!"

"We can call him 'Thes,' for short," said Ben, whose best friend John Ray was.

"So we can." "That setttles it!" "Thes!" "Look sharp, Thes!" "Say, please, Thes!" "Do n't cry, Thes." "Be a man, Thes!" and to relieve their feelings all the boys but Ben, who was burdened with the baby, turned hand-springs and vaulted over the nearest fence several times. Even Luke warmed up and began to take an interest.

“Do you suppose your mother will let you keep the baby?” he asked Ben.

“Yes,” said Ben; “there are only us three, mother and grandmother with me, and we all like children. Besides, what else could we do? Some one has to take the poor little thing, and mother and grandmother are always ready to do good.”

“Some of our baby’s outgrown clothes will just fit it,” said Ned Brown, “I’ll go home for them. Want some new clothes, Thes?”

Thus the boys viewed their treasure with growing favor.

“See here,” said John Ray: “in England all treasure found in a field is the king’s. This ought to be so. This baby must belong to the King, you know. I mean that we must be careful to make him good; don’t you see?”

“Maybe his people were thieves,” said Luke.

“Perhaps; and maybe not. He need not know about that; we can teach him what is right and straight.”

“Provided we are right and straight ourselves; haven’t we a pretty big contract on our hands?” said Frank.

“The sermon last Sunday said there was a Silent Partner that helped all along.”

Daleton felt a quiver of excitement when

"The Crowd" brought home that baby, but the Daleton mothers rose nobly to the occasion. What was needed for the present was done, and day by day "The Crowd's" plan worked so well that Thesaurus is now a fine honest lad of ten, and "The Crowd," now in business or college, are still bringing up their "found boy" for the King.

Robert gave a sigh of deep content.

"Did it truly happen, Mr. Tracy?" asked Cicely.

"I was that minister's son; one of the crowd."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Tracy," said several.

Robert looked anxiously at the clock; there surely was time for "just one more," his usual plea when tales were on the *tapis*. How happy he was to hear Miss Eunice say, "That story reminds me of Mrs. Clifford Austen's boy—Henry."

"Why, isn't Henry their own boy?" asked Ned. "I saw him at a Fourth of July picnic last year. He is real nice; but I never guessed he was adopted."

"Oh, it is no secret. They call him Austen for convenience, and I think the love is as strong as if the tie was of blood. Mrs. Austen told me the story, and as I liked it I wrote

it out. It is short, but if you wish I will read it to you. It is in my desk."

"I'm sure we shall all be glad to hear it, Eunice," said Mrs. Lyman and Mrs. Hastings.

"I'm sorry it is short," said Robert. "That is the fault of most of Cousin Eunice's stories; that, and that she puts too much talk in them very often — and moral. Sometime, Cousin Eunice, I will show you just how to write a story."

"I know a little boy who thinks too much of his own opinions," whispered grandma very softly in Robert's ear; but as she gave his cheek a little consoling pat he did not feel so much grieved, and gently rested his head against her arm.

"I call my story," said Miss Eunice,

"THE LONELY BOY."

"Ruth, don't you go out on the piazza; there's a boy there," warned Betty.

Ruth's mamma was in the kitchen, making a pudding, and heard Betty's warning. It was not well to make Ruth cowardly or ungracious, so mamma said, "The boy will not harm my little girl; perhaps you can make him happier by smiling kindly at him."

Ruth ran out and found a small ragged lad eating the big dinner given him.

"You is pretty hungry," said Ruth.

"Awful," said the boy.

"Why does n't you eat dinner at your home?"

"I have n't any home."

"No home! Dreadful!" Ruth's eyes grew dim. "Is n't home where your mamma is and papa?"

"I have n't any mamma or papa."

Ruth's eyes overflowed, a little clear rain on her rose-pink cheeks. Then she brightened.

"But, boy, you has God."

"No; I do n't know him," said the boy.

"Do n't know God! Not know the dear good God, boy! Oh, how lonesome you is!"

"Yes, so I am," said the boy, ceasing to eat. "I feel pretty bad."

"Yes, boy; lonesome makes you feel dreadful bad in here," and Ruth laid her chubby hands on her little breast. "I was lonesome once, when papa and mamma went to Aunt Kate when she was sick. I felt terrible in here, an' cried. Betty said 'cause I was lonely; and when they came back the terrible feel went away. Oh, boy, I wish you need n't be lonesome. How old is you?"

"Twelve."

"And what is your name?"

"Henry."

“I had a little brother named Henry. He would be twelve if he stayed down here, but God took him up to heaven when he had white clothes on. He is very glad up there, and sings and plays with angels.”

“That little kid is well off,” said the lonely boy.

Ruth saw her papa nearing the gate. She ran to him. “Oh, papa, a lonely boy is here. He has n’t any home, or papa, or mamma, and he is twelve—just like our heaven-boy.”

Papa clasped Ruth’s hand closer, as he always did at the thought of the child removed out of his touch and sight. Ruth looked earnestly at him. “Can’t you help the lonely boy, papa?”

“We’ll see about it,” said papa cheerfully.

A little questioning brought out facts. The lonely boy’s papa, a workman, had been killed by the fall of a wall when the boy was a baby. When he was six his mother died, and he went to his Aunt Jane. He could read; he liked to read; went to school until he was eight; then Aunt Jane’s husband made him work, helping at a coffee-stand. His Aunt Jane died a year ago; he was very sorry; she was kind to him.

“Why have you left your uncle? Did he drive you off?” asked Ruth’s papa.

“No; but—well, he did what he ought n’t

to, and the police got him. When the police came I ran and got out of town as fast as ever I could."

"Why? What had you done to make you fear the officers?"

"Nuffin. But, mister, I knew about him, and if they got me they'd ask the questions and make me tell. You do n't like to tell bad about folks you live with, you see. Aunt Jane was kind to me, and she would have felt bad if she thought I'd tell about him and get him sent up. And he was n't bad to me—much. He gave me a dime once to go to a show; he always bought me shoes; and once I was sick, and he let me lie abed three days. So I ran off before the p'lice thought about such a little boy as me, so I'd not have to tell. Mebbe he'll get off and not do it again. It was about bad money."

The boy stopped to cough.

"You seem to have a cold, my lad."

"Sleepin' out nights," he said patiently.

"Well, come along with me and let me see what I can do for you."

The boy rose, looking up timidly. "You wont give me to the p'lice, mister! I haven't done one thing; not one."

"Never fear; I'm going to give you a suit of clothes. Tell mamma, Ruth, that I'll be back by dinner-time."

When papa came back Ruth was all eagerness about the "lonely boy."

"I bought him a good suit, underclothes and shoes," said papa, "and I left him with Barber John for a hot bath and a shampoo. Then he is to come here, and you can entertain him in here with mamma, and in a day or two we will see what it is best to do with him. Taken care of, he may become a good man. Left to wander, he will doubtless be a bad man. It is well to save souls from death."

When the lonely boy appeared at the gate Ruth ran to meet him, led him to a chair before the fire, brought her picture-books and toys, and she and her lonely boy had a happy afternoon. Mamma noticed that he was a quiet, gentle, pleasant-spoken little fellow. His cough was bad and he was pale; so after tea he was dosed and poulticed and put in a warm bed, just as mamma's own little boy would have been.

Next morning, however, he was very sick, and had the doctor. It was a week before he was quite well and able to be about. In that time he had grown into the heart of the family. Quiet and tender care had brought back memories of his mother, apparently a good woman.

"My boy," said Ruth's papa to Henry when he was quite recovered, "I am going to send you to school, to hear what the teacher says of

you. If you wish to stay with me I shall expect you to be industrious and obedient, speak the truth, and use good clean language. Can you do that, think?"

The lonely boy smiled joyfully. Those were easy terms on which to secure a home—a family.

The lonely boy is six years older now, almost a man. Ruth calls him her "big borrowed brother." She has two "little truly brothers" of her own also now, twins. Ruth thinks it just the best thing in the world that they are twins, as that makes one apiece for her and the big borrowed brother, formerly the Lonely Boy.

A moment or two before Miss Eunice finished her reading, Keziah, who had concluded to treat the guests, came in bearing a large tray on which were dainty little cups of bouillon. With the privileged frankness of an old and trusted servant Keziah made known her views, as she passed about the cups.

"I make sure that these are all fine stories, you seem so interested in them; but I know one that tops the whole of them, if I do say it. It is true, too, every word of it."

"Tell it to us, Keziah!" cried Cicely, and all the other children took up the chorus. "Tell it to us," Keziah.

"It's too late," said Keziah, "and it is more

a grown folk's story than a children's story; perhaps you children would n't see the true point to it. Besides, I could n't tell a story in a proper understandable manner, not to save my life. The story is about Sardinia Bowker, that lives on the rising land yonder, Doe Creek way."

"What, Sardinia Bowker, that comes to Tipton church in a bright grass-green wool de laine frock?" cried Cicely.

"I do n't care what she wears," said Keziah briskly. "I know what she is: one of the best girls, and the bravest and truest, the Lord ever made. She's a poor, plain girl, sure enough, and her story is only about pigs, but it is worth hearing; and I do n't misdoubt the angels know about it up in heaven. If Miss Eunice will write it out Monday I'll give her the points and facts as I know them."

"Thank you, Keziah. I shall be very glad to do it," said Eunice.

"The world," said Mr. Vance, "is full of heroes and heroines whose names are not written on earthly pages, but in the records of heaven."

CHAPTER V.

THE DAY OF THE BLESSED.

“O day of rest! How beautiful, how fair,
How welcome to the weary and the old!
Day of the Lord! and truce to earthly care!
Day of the Lord—as all our days should be!”

“WHAT do you suppose we'll do to-day! No Sunday-school, no church”—thus the boys and girls gathered at Madame Baron's greeted each other when they met on Sunday morning. A beautiful morning it was: the air mild with the new warmth of spring, the sky blue, with only a few fleecy-white clouds slowly drifting; along the lawn great clumps of daffodils unfolding, balmy-breathed; afar along the river's welling brim the red-bud trees, all one rosy glow, shaken as by a wind by the strong waters that rose against their stems and rocked them until their dainty blossoms fell upon the debris-encumbered current as it tumbled heavily along. A lovely day, but silent; strangely silent: there were no sounds of labor calling from field to field, and no full-toned bells echoing from church to church, while the river, struggling against the highest banks, had already wrought desolation and threatened more.

Mr. Tracy, Mr. Danforth and Mr. White concluded to try to reach Tipton church on horseback. There were but two creeks, which might perhaps be crossed higher up.

"If cries for help have come from any of our neighborhoods we want to know it and plan to give the help," said Mr. Danforth.

"I propose to hold a Sunday-school for all these young people here," said Mr. Vance; "that will occupy the morning.

"I should be glad," said Madame Baron, "if Mr. White will have a service in the dining-room for us all this afternoon. Besides ourselves, here, there are the five servants now in the house and Peter's family; you will have an audience, Mr. White."

"I have good example for considering one or two an audience," said Mr. White, "and I shall be glad indeed to have a service."

"Will you kindly also, before you set out for church, open your books and let me select one for each of the young people and for the servants, as a memento of these days when the floods have shut us in," said Mrs. Ainslie.

Thus the Sabbath was provided with its appropriate occupation. The Sunday-school and the books filled the hours until the gentlemen were at home for the two o'clock dinner. The afternoon service was well-adapted to the audi-

ence: then Eunice went to the piano and everyone's favorite hymns and psalms were sung. So, when after-tea came, the day seemed to have vanished like a flash of light.

"I think I should like to tell the story tonight," said Mr. Vance; "it was suggested to me by a remark of Ned's at my Sunday-school this morning. I had the Ten Commandments repeated. When the second was given, at the clause 'visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments,' Ned said he 'did not wish to be irreverent, but he never could make that seem fair;' he 'could not see that the children were either to praise or to blame for what their fathers had done.' I pointed out to him that the wrath of the Lord took a far less sweep than his mercy, for iniquities are visited only to the third and fourth generation, while the righteous are blessed to thousands of generations. I also told him that, as far as souls are concerned, 'the soul that sinneth, it shall die,' and that the prophet tells us, 'The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son.' Ned says he understands the chapter in Eze-kiel, and it seems all right to him, but he cannot

make the second commandment seem 'real fair.' When I was a boy in school one of my school-mates expressed the same idea in much the same way to our teacher. It was at a boys' boarding-school in London, kept by a quaint, good man who set our spiritual training above all price. When the boy expressed his views he looked at him thoughtfully for a little time, then he provided the instruction due."

A STORY ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE FAIR.

"I will make a bargain with you, my boy. I will give you a whole holiday: go out and amuse yourself; and I will give you a crown, so that you may be able to stop and buy any little things you like. Only you must promise to keep your eyes open, and notice everything you see, and inquire into everything that seems strange, and report to me to-night."

"All right," said the boy, seizing the crown, and down he rushed out-of-doors and hopped on one leg a whole block, and turned somersaults the next block, and then ran whistling ever so many blocks, until he brought up short, remembering that he was to observe and inquire into every odd thing he saw. He came to a stand just in front of a little shop, where a child sat on a doorstep and an old woman stood behind the child. The youngster was the most

cross-eyed that ever the boy had seen. He felt that he must inquire.

“What makes the child so cross-eyed?”

“Both its father and mother were cross-eyed,” said the old woman.

“I don’t think that’s fair,” said the boy, “that the poor child’s looks should be ruined on account of its father and mother.”

The woman took a little looking-glass from her counter and held it before the boy’s face.

“How did you come to be so much better looking than most boys?”

“Why, my father and mother are very handsome; they are called about the finest looking couple in London.”

“And do you think it’s fair you should look so uncommon well?”

“Why, yes; why not?” said the boy.

“Some rules, you see, work both ways,” said the old woman.

The boy went on till he came to a small house where by the open window lay a pale, sick young man in a chair. As the boy passed he felt very sorry for the invalid, and then thought it might be his duty to inquire. So, to make inquiring easy, he bought three oranges and ran back to the window.

“I’m out on a holiday,” said the boy, “and I felt no end sorry to see you sick, and I got

you these to show you how sorry I feel for you. What's the matter?"

"I am sick with consumption," said the young man.

"How did you get it?"

"Both my parents died with it."

"I don't think that's fair," said the boy, "for you to be sick because your parents were sickly."

"You look very strong," said the invalid.

"I'm no end strong," said the boy. "Just look at my muscle; feel my grip: and that isn't half my grip."

"How did you come to be so strong?"

"Why, my father is awfully strong. He can pull a boat faster than any man but a professional; he can bat a ball out of sight: you never saw such a strong man."

"And you don't quarrel with inheriting strength? You think it is quite fair?"

The boy walked on to a bookstore and went in. At the door stood a "lord's" carriage, liveries, coachman, footman, coat of arms, great splendor. After these great folk went out the boy bought a book. "It is quite fine to be such great people," he said.

"Fine enough," said the book-seller; "but only for one thing I might have been in that lord's place and he in mine."

"How was that?" asked the boy.

"In the time of Charles I. the Beaufort family had great estates. The elder son sided with the Commons, the younger with the king. When Charles II. came back the older son was banished as a traitor and the estates were given to the younger son, who was made a lord. They have been lords ever since. I descend from the elder son. If he had held to the king rather than the Commons I would now be Lord Beaufort and not bookseller Beaufort."

"Dear me!" said the boy; "why did they not punish the Beaufort himself, and let the children keep the estates?"

"That's not the way they do things. The children take the father's chances. The title was a reward of loyalty, and the loyal man's children had the benefit of it. You are talking to me: I am on the losing side, and you say 'What a pity!' 'If you were talking to Lord Beaufort's son you would hear the same story and say—'How fortunate!'"

The boy went on, to the market, and bought some fruit.

"This fine day reminds me of the country," said the fruit seller; "I lived there when I was young."

"Why did n't you stay there?" inquired the boy.

“Because my father signed for a man that failed, and the creditors took away our farm.”

“That does n't seem fair,” said the boy, hesitatingly.

“It's good sound law. Of course it seems hard on me. If it had been left to me perhaps I would not have signed the security; but my father did, and I could n't claim that I had nothing to do with it and so should get back the place. Inheritance works both ways, and people do n't quarrel with it. The savage inherits his father's hut, bow and spear; the law of heredity accompanies the tie of blood, of family. In this law, and in the feelings of responsibility, gratitude, unity arising from it, men are marked as superior to brutes, which have no such notions.”

The boy started off to run to his tutor's, but presently found his way blocked by the setting forth of a funeral. He stopped beside an old man who sat on a doorstep.

“We are all born to be buried,” quoth the old man.

“Why do people die?” asked the boy.

“Because of sin,” said the old man. “‘Wherefore death passed upon all men because all have sinned.’”

“But this burial is of a very little child,” said the boy; “it cannot have sinned as we have.”

“But sin must have been in it, or it could

not die," said the old man. "A perfectly sinless body would be so fit a home for a sinless immortal spirit that the two could not be parted. This little child inherited sin with its race, before it could sin consciously in itself; if not, it could not die. 'Death by sin,' even on them who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."

"See here, man," said the boy: "Jesus our Lord was perfectly holy, and yet he died."

"My son," said the old man, "remember two texts: Christ says of his life, 'No man taketh it from me: I lay it down of myself.' Also remember that when he was on the cross he 'cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.' He died to atone for our sins."

The funeral had moved on, and the way being clear the boy ran off to his tutor. "What have you seen to-day?" asked the tutor.

"I saw quite a number of things," said the boy. "I found some people that had red hair and crossed-eyes because their parents had the same. I found some folks rich because their fathers had been wise and busy, others poor because their parents had been idle or foolish. Some people had diseases because their family was not healthy, and generally children had to take their fathers' fortunes in body and money. I find that this has been so always, and that

some things are so large that we can not see the whole of them until we get to the next world—also that we can not understand some things because we can only get hold of little bits of them: I stopped at the menagerie, and saw a blind boy trying to find out how an elephant looked by just pulling at his tail. He said he did n't think elephants were very big, or had much shape to them. And finally I saw a funeral, and began to find out that what we lose one way may be made up to us in another."

"Very well!" said the tutor. "You found that when we inherit physical things from our parents we say 'fair,' and when we are told of our unhappy moral inheritance we say 'not fair!' Scripture says, 'As we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly.' 'If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.' By one sin of Adam we fell; but from our many offences committed every day—wilful offenses, heaping up our own measure of transgression—we are justified by the righteousness of Christ, if we trust him as our Saviour, and are raised from earth to heaven."

"Seems we gain more than we lost," said the boy.

“That makes things seem very different,” said Ned. “I suppose I have seen a great many things like that—and never thought what they meant.”

“In this world there are many things that at first seem to us not fair at all,” said Cicely.

“What else would you look for, child, in a world where there is so much sin, and consequent selfishness?” said Miss Eunice.

“Perhaps it is the selfishness coming from sin that makes most of the unfairness,” assented Cicely. “How many people are very poor, even very good people, who seem to deserve what is quite different. The book which Mrs. Ainslie gave me to-day made me think of that. It was about home missionaries: I have before read about them and how much they have to suffer, and I wonder they have courage for it! I think it is dreadful. If they are willing to do the hard work I think other people ought to be willing to make it as easy for them as they can.”

“I have been a colporter in various parts of the country many years,” said Mr. White, “and I have seen much of Home Missionaries; as a class, they are the most laborious, self-sacrificing, godly people I know. It is not only the missionary men who share the toils and make the sacrifices; even the little children of the families get their share of it.”

“Mr. White, cannot you tell us a home missionary story, just to finish off Sunday evening with—something you have known or seen in your travels?” said Cicely.

“I can try,” said Mr. White. “I was thinking of such a story for you, to-day. I will call it

“THE BROWN GOWN.”

The “brown gown” was the child of Hilary’s genius and was born in a garret. Some garrets are affluent, bloated millionaire garrets, full of the spoils of past luxury; others are “poor, but respectable,” like the parents of most heroes. The garret famous as the native place of the brown gown was of this latter variety; it belonged to the home of a western missionary, and was, in fact, the unfinished story over the kitchen—a story which, in process of time, might develop into a bedroom, provided the missionary’s congregation ever found themselves able to expend any more money on the manse.

Why had Hilary gone up into the garret? Because it had a wide and noble view, over vast green prairies sweeping towards an opal sky; and to this beautifully enlarged field of vision Hilary was fain to escape from the sight of little Rachel’s red nose and rapidly-winking eyes. Rachel was trying not to cry while she pared apples. Possibly she did not like to pare

apples? Yes, indeed; she was not hostile to any kind of honest labor. She would have willingly pared apples for a week if that would procure her a gown, for the want of a gown lay as a source of her tears. Moreover, she was trying not to cry; for, pray, what was the use of crying for the impossible? Rachel had considered the entire question: money there was none; material was equally wanting; no famous "box" was on its way. She had made a mental inventory of her gowns; all were old, nearly outgrown, made over and over until further renovation was impossible.

Evidently the affair of the gown was hopeless. If Rachel went to the festival she must be shabby enough, while, so far as she knew, every other little girl was to go in garments of praise. The spirit of heaviness being her portion, Rachel, ten years old, and small of her age, wept a small weep privately, as she supposed, but Hilary saw it.

Hilary was twenty-five, large and beautiful; a visitor from the fortunate East, where gowns and culture abounded. She was a college graduate, assistant editor of a newspaper, a cousin of Rachel's mother, and she had come to this missionary manse on a vacation trip, which had lengthened into six months, and would close in two weeks more. The visit had lengthened

because Hilary had found in it some of the Lord's errands to do.

As the vacation lengthened and the errands were done Hilary's finances had been reduced, and now Hilary had been compelled "to draw a line." Not another penny dare she spend; she had her fare home and fifty dollars beside. This was a depth of impecuniosity new to her, and deeper she dared not go. She reflected, in this connection, that her cousins, the Daytons, these home missionaries with whom she tarried, never knew what it was to have their "expenses and fifty dollars beside."

When Hilary came to see Mrs. Dayton, who was her nearest living relative, what had she found? Five little children, with a mother worn out with doing hard work to which she was unequal. The household gear, which had been pretty, neat and new when she was married, was, with long use and several "movings," dingy, worn and insufficient. Books and magazines, absolute necessities and dear delights to Hilary, were almost entirely wanting in the home of these educated people. Once, in great hardships, the "Encyclopedia" and the "Unabridged" had been sold. How eagerly the family had read the few volumes and periodicals which Hilary had brought with her!

Only one week had Hilary been at the Day-

tons'—during which she had ordered fifty dollars' worth of books as her present to these friends—when Mrs. Dayton was seized with a severe fever.

No money, debts accumulating until the inadequate salary should be paid—this was the financial status of these servants of the church.

“The Christian lesson of how to abound seems to be left out of your education,” laughed Hilary to Mr. Dayton.

What else could she do other than what she did? She hired a servant, provided for the needs of the invalid, bought bed-linen, towels, a wrapper, and, seized with the *rabies* of improvement, bought paint and inspired Mr. Dayton to paint the woodwork, and then to construct a lounge and two or three tables, which she upholstered and decorated with cretonne and muslin; draperies were hung at the windows, and under Hilary's busy fingers knick-knacks and ornaments common in the East grew and multiplied, so that poor Lucy Dayton, coming out of her long illness, found herself in a renovated home. Boxes had come, at Hilary's order, from the East, and a friend had sent money for painting the manse.

Doing all this, there was much which Hilary perforce left undone; and the wardrobes of the children were of the neglected affairs, except

that some of Hilary's gowns had been turned into little frocks and aprons.

Thus it had come about that Hilary's visit was near its close. Hilary had no more money to spend: the servant was dismissed, the house-mother—stronger and happier than for years—was at her tasks once more, and Rachel peeled apples, and wiped furtive tears, conscious that of all the children at the coming festival she would wear the worst gown. Now Rachel, though a home missionary's little girl, had her tastes, and liked a frock that fitted and was not faded. Rachel's care weighed heavily on Hilary's heart as she stood in that garret.

Then her eyes withdrew from the wide prospect of prairie-land and casually fixed on a brown coat—a frock coat made with long, ample skirts and wide breast and sleeves; a coat of chocolate-colored west of England goods—owned by Mr. Dayton in his "senior year," now faded, linings gone, edges worn, and past using even for doing chores and painting in. In fact, various spots and patches of paint attested its latest use.

Gazing absently, Hilary noted that the wrong side of this garment retained its rich chocolate hue unharmed. Beside it hung a brown silk umbrella, long past use.

Suddenly Hilary's face grew luminous with

a great idea. She discussed the situation within herself.

“It would turn beautifully; the wrong side is so soft and rich. The sleeves would make sleeves and vest; the skirt, with silk puffs at the seams, would be long enough and wide enough. I should make the waist a jacket. What a blessing that when Cousin Lucy was married umbrellas were large and of good quality!”

Forthwith Hilary went for her work-basket and Rachel's most neatly-fitting gown. She remained in the seclusion of the garret that afternoon and the next morning. The family were duly reverent; they supposed that she was writing an editorial.

The next day, while Rachel with mournful resignation peeled potatoes, Hilary called her. Up to the garret went Rachel, two steps at a time. Hilary was an authority in the family. Rachel returned in half an hour, seeming rather to fly than to walk.

“Mother, a new dress! Such a beauty! Woolen and silk! It fits! Oh, it is for the festival!”

“Has Hilary been buying you a dress?” cried poor Mrs. Dayton. “I'm so sorry; she could not afford it.”

“It is a new dress,” said Rachel, “made out of an old coat and an old umbrella.”

At the festival Hilary had the satisfaction of hearing folks say Rachel was the best dressed child in the room.

She heard more.

Mrs. Green: "The Daytons must have come into a fortune, dressing Rachel like that!"

Mrs. Hurd: "No need of raising our man's salary; silk and all wool, indeed!"

Mrs. Platt: "I'll remember it when I subscribe to the salary next year!"

Hilary had had trials since she came to the Daytons. One of the deacons had begged her to let him put the money sent for painting the manse to the credit of the pastor's salary.

"You mean," said Hilary stiffly, "to credit yourselves with what you never gave; the minister with what he never received, for the manse is not his; and the salary with money never paid on it! Is that it?"

Again, the Finance Committee had urged her to write all that she had laid out for the Daytons—the money for books, muslin, medicine and cretonne—to the account of paid salary."

"I'm not a member of your congregation, and I'm not paying salary," said Hilary.

Hilary had seen Mr. Platt pay his subscription "in kind;" the kind being half a barrel of grown wheat flour rated at highest Eastern

price ; which flour Mrs. Platt had inadvertently remarked she was glad to be rid of.

The remarks at the festival broke down the last barriers of Hilary's reserve. The Ladies' Society was to have a meeting next day, to discuss the yearly donation. Not a woman was missing—the gown of Rachel was in every mind. Hilary, too, was there, near the door, though uninvited.

After various speeches and suggestions had been made, some of them bearing on the luxurious life of pastor Dayton and family, Hilary walked to the presiding officer's side, and craving leave to speak began the story of her visit to the Daytons. She sketched their early life, its comforts and possibilities ; she told what she had seen and found at the manse ; what she had given and spent ; and wound up with the "brown gown" made out of an old coat and an old umbrella.

There was silence, and then reaction ; there were blushes, sighs, and some tears, and then there was a wave of honest penitence, which rolled on and on in that congregation until that church was not only self-supporting but well supported.

However, Hilary holds that even nineteen hours a day at the editorial desk would be "easier than home missionating."

“I wish I had been there,” cried Robert indignantly. “I would have given those stingy people something besides talk!”

“Oh, would you!” said Ben teasingly.

“Perhaps some talk and some good example was what they needed and could best appreciate,” said Mrs. Lyman.

“A big chocolate drop to whichever gets up to bed quickest and quietest!” said Cousin Eunice. The juniors faded out of the room like a cloud of noiselessly-flitting night moths.

CHAPTER VI.

OF ERRANDS DONE FOR GOD.

“Howe'er it be it seems to me
'T is only noble to be good:
Kind hearts are more than coronets
And simple faith than Norman blood.”

ON Monday morning Cicely was busy dusting the library, where Miss Eunice was at work on her type-writer.

“Cousin Eunice,” said Cicely, “are you getting ready that story of Keziah’s?”

“Yes, and I am putting my very best work into it.”

“Then perhaps it will be a good story. I am very curious to hear it, for I cannot imagine how a story told by such a very plain woman as Keziah, about such a very common sort of girl as Sardinia Bowker, could be worth anything at all.”

“I am beginning to think, Cicely, that Sardinia is a very uncommon girl, unless industry, courage, generosity, patience, and filial dutifulness are commoner qualities than I have supposed them to be.”

“We naturally think that heroines have

something very impressive in appearance or manners; that they must be beautiful and—well, take your breath away when you meet them in the street. I can't believe that Joan of Arc, or Madame Roland, or Anne Askew, or Hannah More was like other people who lived near them," said Cicely.

"Perhaps they did not appear so exceptional to their neighbors and cotemporaries as to us. One needs to be far off to get a realizing view of some things, and that may hold good of some people. I fancy Jael and Deborah, and Ruth and Esther, did not appear to their fellow citizens so far above the common style of people as they do to us. When I was travelling in Switzerland the mountains did not seem so high to me when I was walking or riding upon them as when I viewed them at a distance. We may be walking here among heroes, the sons of immortal fame, and not know it."

"This morning Mr. Vance is to study heroic deeds with us. We have all to mention one or two heroic deeds or people, and then we shall read about them," said Cicely. "This evening we can see how near that Sardinia Bowker, the girl with the queer name and country ways, comes to one of our morning heroines."

"As the story this evening really belongs to Keziah," said Madame Baron to her friends, "and

she will be interested to know how Eunice has worked it up, I think of asking Ezra, Keziah, and the other servants of the house in to hear it."

"I hope you will, by all means," said Mrs. Hastings. "We are indebted for very much of our comfort here to the cheerful, careful attendance of Ezra and Keziah."

The family were at dinner, and the boys seemed in haste to be away. As usual Robert was spokesman.

"Grandma, would you mind excusing some of us before dessert? There has a small raft of lumber—boards, shingles, clapboards, lots of kinds—gone ashore at the Bend, where Alec came in. The men who own the lumber tried to take it down, and they didn't understand the current or how to make the raft just right. They're rather young men, and this was their venture, and they feel terribly to lose their stuff. Peter and Ezra and Alec went down to help bring in all they could, so the men could sell it near here. Maybe we boys could help."

Madame Baron looked reluctant to trust her grandson near that turbulent water; she glanced at Mr. Danforth.

"If there is a loss that might be saved to the young men we ought to be there helping," said Mr. Vance. "I move that we also be excused from dessert, Mr. Tracy."

“Yes, indeed!” said Mr. Tracy.

“I will go too,” said Mr. White.

“Madame Baron, I will be responsible for Robert with my boys,” said Mr. Danforth. Then all the gentlemen and lads left the dinner-table to go to the rescue of the lumber. After the door closed it reopened, and Robert’s curly head came in. “Say, grandma, maybe you would n’t mind saving us some dessert!”

At supper reports were made that most of the lumber had been brought ashore and safely piled up. Already purchasers had appeared, and the young men who owned the raft were feeling quite cheerful.

“They built a kind of a board wigwam,” said Robert, “and Ezra gave them some straw for beds, and some potatoes, and Peter’s wife sent them a gallon of milk.”

When Madame invited Keziah to come and hear “her story,” and bring Ezra and the rest, Keziah said “But, Madame, the man Slocum, who bought the Beck place up by Doe Creek, is here; he came to buy some of that lumber—a deal of it—for he is going to build. Ezra knows him, and asked him to stop over night, as it was late to go back.”

“Very well, Keziah, bring him in also. You will all be pleased to hear the story of—

“SARDINIA BOWKER’S PIGS.”

“I want to know!”

Mrs. Bowker raised her eyes with something very like astonishment in their brown depths; she stripped the dough from her fingers and held them extended while she gazed at her daughter Sardinia.

“You think you’re goin’ to make your fortune; do you? Well, you never will while your pa is runnin’ this yere farm.”

“Now, ma, he’s real forehanded,” replied Sardinia deprecatingly. “We hev the most land and the biggest house of any one around.”

“’T wa’n’t his plannin’,” and Mrs. Bowker plunged her hands into the dough. “He’s a strong man,” with some pride, “and works fit to kill when he do work; but his head’s more like one of them there little red balloons Syke brought from the fair than anything ever I see—blows in any wind. I’ve contrived to be the stiddest breeze, and sence I’ve got this farm and all in my name I’ve breathed a sight easier. Well, you kin go, fur all me, though your pa’ll miss you a heap—me, too, Sardinia. I don’t know what I would do without you. Any other one of my children’s jes’ like their pa, ’ceptin’ you, and you’re like me,” with a thump at the dough. “Goin’ to Beech’s? There’s Tommy screamin’ his tongue loose!”

Sardinia, a tall, slender girl, with one shoulder slightly higher than the other, "from ker-ryin' babies," her mother said, stepped out the door to interview the youngest Bowker. Her reddish-brown hair glowed in the warm sunlight which flickered through the pale leaves of two cottonwood-trees; beyond the trees was a corn-field which stretched away until it met the sky; to the left, beyond the Osage-orange hedge and the road, was a great extent of prairie, bestuck with posts which marked the lines of barbed wire fences.

Rain had been plenty so far, and there was a look of freshness and growth about fields and pasture and prairie that was in itself an inspiration. Either that or something else had caused great plans to spring up in Sardinia's breast. In her small attic room, if room it could be called, she had felt strange and new desires for independence, for progress, for advancement in the goods of this world.

Since she was a child she had been given calves and pigs and colts, and they had been the basis of many a dream. She would plan to sell her calf, or pig, or colt, and would revel in the thought of receiving money—hard money—to expend in whatever her heart most desired at the time.

These dreams never had a realization. After

patient watching over calf, pig, or colt, and free and unsuspecting use of the word "my," the animal was invariably sold by her father, and the proceeds never found their way to Sardinia's empty pockets.

But now she reasoned that if she could in some way earn a couple of pigs they would be hers in fact as well as in name. And while she was planning how she might earn these little pigs, as she worked in the house, or milked, or rode after the cattle, or did the thousand and one things always waiting for Sardinia on the farm, she at the same time planned far greater results from their ownership than had ever occurred to her before. Two little pigs she must have; she would keep them; there would be more little pigs; some she would sell; she would save every cent of the profits and buy more stock, and then buy land, and then—but she was sure to grow dizzy on the heights of her imaginary prosperity, and further performances were dreamed, not planned. And now in these fresh spring days at last her opportunity had come. Mrs. Beech was "so drove with work, that if Sardinia would only give her a lift, for a matter of three weeks or so, she would give Sardinia three little pigs out of the next litter."

The engagement was entered into and it

was brought to a successful termination. Cyrus Bowker—his large, ruddy, yellow-bearded face aglow with pride for his eldest—drove Sardinia and her three little pigs home; and the arrival of the party was greeted by whoops and hurrahs from the younger Bowkers, and with a “Did get 'em; did n't you, Sardinia! Well, I'm mighty pleased to see you back, fur sure!” from Mrs. Bowker, as she stood on the flat stone that served for a doorstep.

Sardinia always remembered that ride home, that triumphal entry under the two cottonwood trees, the gorgeous pageantry of the clouds in the western sky, the long, long shadows of the trees, and old Pont enthusiastically wagging his aged tail.

The little pigs were attended to like babies: they grew and throve, and were, without doubt, the most knowing, curly-tailed little pigs in the world, and their joint and several grunts were as music to Sardinia's ears. When they were well-grown pigs, of uncommon size, beauty and discretion, a hog-dealer arrived upon the scene; and when Cyrus sold his own pigs he sought to swell his honest gains by throwing in Sardinia's three.

Mrs. Bowker had been standing by the well, shading her eyes with her hand and looking down towards the pens. Her eyes snapped, her

lips straightened, her faded calico gown and faded calico sun-bonnet took on an almost starched look, and she went down to the pens with the air of a general.

“You ain’t allottin’ to sell them pigs of Sardinia’s, Cyrus Bowker?”

“Why not?” he asked with unfeigned surprise.

“For the cause that them pigs ain’t your’n.”

“Well, they’re Sardinia’s — they’re big enough to sell, and ’ll bring a good price.”

“You ain’t to sell one of them pigs of Sardinia’s!” There was a staccato ring in the woman’s voice that startled the dealer.

“You go ’long to the house. I’m doin’ this,” said Cyrus sullenly.

“See here, Cyrus, I’m planted right here! Them pigs is Sardinia’s and she earnt ’em, and you’re not to sell one of ’em. And you see here,” eyeing the dealer squarely: “ef you buy ’em you’ll be sued for buying pigs as didn’t belong to the man sellin’ ’em, and make yourself more trouble than all them pigs is worth. Sardinia’s the best gal that ever lived, and she’s been a-workin’ and a-plannin’ about them pigs, an’ you sha’ n’t sell one of ’em, Cyrus Bowker!”

“Well,” said he hastily, “I wont sell ’em; didn’t know’s I was stirrin’ up sech a hornet’s nest—women’s so contramptious!”

So the pigs were saved that time, and except for a visible coolness between the heads of the house Sardinia was not aware that anything had happened.

Two years passed. Sardinia was leaning over one of her pig-pens looking at the pigs. She had sold a couple the spring before and had built four good pens with the proceeds. Her pigs were the finest pigs in the county. She would sell some that fall and save the money, and she would have a good many to sell the next year; and her mind ran on and on. Worldly prosperity was surely hers.

Cyrus Bowker drove in with his team, rubicund, jovial, elated; it showed in the way he flapped the lines, even in the way he stopped the team. Mrs. Bowker, sitting by the kitchen door putting a clean waist on Tommie, saw those signs of good feeling and her eyes grew darker, her lips straightened, as was the custom when she braced herself for the defensive, and Tommie whined out, "Maw, why you yankin' so?" while "maw" thought to herself, "Now, what tomfoolery is it? Thank the Lord he hain't sold the farm."

"Maria," said Cyrus coming in the door and affecting not to notice her repellent attitude, "our fortune's made! Tommie shall be a gentleman, you sha'n't hev to work so hard, I wont

moil and toil and delve day in and day out on this pesky farm! We'll begin by all hands goin' fishin' up to the crick to-morrer. You can jes' put up a little snack; can't you?"

"I could put up a little snack a sight easier'n you could put up with it," was the dry answer. "Sit right yonder, Cyrus Bowker, and tell me what fool undertakin' you've been an' gone an' plunged us all into now."

Cyrus sat down in the chair designated and twirled his hat.

"Course you're down on it 'fore you've heard the fust word—that's your natur; I never seen you no other way: but when you hear about this, if you've any head for business at all—which you hain't—you'll see there's money in it. Money? There's thousands!"

"Well, what is it?"

"I seen a man over to town to-day—a fust-rate business head—and he, takin' a likin' to me and my honest face, as he said—"

"Shucks!" impatiently.

"Takin' a likin' to me and my honest face, as he said," went on the relater, doggedly, "picked me out to let into the biggest concern that's ever come to Kansas."

"Likely!"

"Well, you'll see. The very biggest thing for money that's ever come to Kansas. I've

got this hull county." Cyrus leaned back in his chair and looked triumphantly at his wife.

"The county, hev' you? He did take a likin' to your honest face fur sure! Air you goin' to own it all?"

"I did n't say what I hed the county fur—I'm to canvas it with a churn. I've bought the right to sell that churn all over this county, and there's thousands in it. Everybody'll want it. Queen Victoria and all the crowned heads of England say as there's no churn like it."

"Cyrus Bowker, air ye all the way benighted? Victoria and a churn! It do take a man to lose his five senses. Is it a churn you'd buy if any one was to bring it to you?"

"Buy it! I should think as how I would buy it—it ain't a churn, though, exactly; the patent's on the dasher."

Mrs. Bowker rubbed her hands together nervously, tried to smooth out her forehead, pressed her lips together tighter, then said sharply:

"So you've to sell a dasher. How much did you pay fur that privilege?"

"Nothin' to count on, considerin' what I'll make offen it—only a hundred and fifty dollars—"

"A hundred — and — fifty — dollars!" The words came out slowly. "And you ain't got a

decent coat to your back. I ain't hed a new dress fur two year. The childern all needs shoes. Sardinia hain't one thing a gal of her age'd oughter hev. The buggy's ben broke past usin' fur a year; all the harness needs fixin'; the kitchen leaks and the well needs repairin'; and in fact, Cyrus, everything is needin' money—and you spend one hundred and fifty dollars for a churn-dasher! And you hain't got no money noway!" There was almost a wail in the woman's voice at the last.

"Course I hain't. Can't get no money offen a farm; and I only give my note, payable in a year, and in a year I'll make thirty times that. That young man showed it all as plain as print. You do n't know nothing about business, Maria."

"You actually gave the note?"

"I actually did," with a smile meant to be assured, but which was a signal failure.

There was a long pause.

"Well, them horses ought n't to stand there sweatin'; supper's about ready." And Mrs. Bowker, with a gloomy face, began to set the table.

Mr. Bowker showed his churn-dasher to several farmers who would n't take it for a present, and after that the dasher stood in the cellar and was never mentioned except occasionally by Mrs. Bowker, who would ask her husband when

he was going to begin to make his thousands; a remark always met by a rapid disappearance of the individual addressed.

Then it came time to pay the note.

Cyrus Bowker received sharp communications from the business-headed young man's lawyer. But there was no way to pay the note. Cattle could not be sold—it was financial suicide to try it. Cattle had been going down steadily, and it was the hardest year there had ever been in Kansas since the grasshopper year, so the people said. Bowker's only crops were for the cattle and to use at home. He was gloomy and morose.

"There's no way to pay that there note," he said with a growl one night at the supper table, "'ceptin' to sell them pigs of Sardinia's."

Sardinia looked up with a flush that completely suffused her fair, slightly freckled face.

"Cyrus Bowker!" said Mrs. Bowker, with a sharp ring in her voice, "I've just been expectin' that since the first day you come home with that fool churn! And I say to you it's wicked—it's wicked—of you to be so pig-headed; you not havin' one speck of sense about business, and to go and sign away what does n't belong to you! Them pigs is Sardinia's; she earnt 'em and tended 'em, and you've no manner of right to go and make a present of 'em to some rascally

swindler she never see! Why ain't you tried to sell your ornery churn dasher? You ain't sold one—not one! You're just the same as tryin' to rob your child, and I say it sha' n't be done!"

"What shall I do?" said Cyrus peevishly.

"Hev you got the hundred and fifty dollars? No, you hain't. Well, then, do n't pay it, and let 'em sue for it. It jes' would do me good to see you sued fur your foolishness!"

"I ain't got no hankerin' to be sued," said Cyrus stubbornly, "even fur to make music for you to dance to. I'm an honest man and lay out to pay my debts, and I've no hankerin' to be sued on my note!"

"It's astonishin' how honest you air—tryin' to take from your own children"—and Mrs. Bowker's usually unflinching voice slightly trembled. Cyrus gave an undistinguishable grunt and flung himself out of the house. Sardinia sat there pale and silent, and her mother gave her one or two furtive glances.

Sardinia did not remain to clear the table as usual; she walked out to the pens and leaned over one, looking at the black, struggling animals. Thirteen grown—all three hundred pounds in weight, and some over that, and, though there was no sale for cattle, hogs brought four cents a pound on foot. The note could be paid out of those pens.



D. B. Keeler.

There was a queer mist before her eyes, and so there was before her mother's eyes as she stood peering out the kitchen window at her daughter.

Sardinia saw her whole future in those pigs; saw in them all her dreams of getting on in the world, of laying up money, of "being somebody."

She turned away from the pen and walked to the corral; her father was driving up the cattle with angry expletives.

"Pa," she said in her slow, soft voice, "you durst sell them pigs to pay your note. I'm will-in'." The man's whole attitude and expression changed at once.

"Sardinia, you air a good gal! I thought as you'd see it so ef you wa'n't talked over," with a jerk of his head toward the house. "Your mother air a good woman, but she've no head for business. I thought you'd as soon I'd hev them hogs. Gals ain't no use for hogs, fur's I kin see. I'll sell 'em to-morrer"—

Sardinia turned toward the house, not looking at the pens, with a slow step and a slight stoop. And the woman watching her from the kitchen window breathed fast and wiped away some scalding tears with the back of her hand.

"There's something dreadfully pathetic about that," said Mrs. Lyman, wiping her eyes.

“Keziah!” said Madame with reproach and indignation, “why didn’t you tell me that at once, when it happened? I ought to have done something about it. I would have tried to help somehow.”

“I only knew the finishing up of it lately, ma’am,” said Keziah, “and I don’t like to be bothering you with all the troubles of the neighborhood. You have enough of them to see after as it is. This house is a regular house of refuge for everybody.”

“Not so bad as that, I hope, Keziah,” said Eunice amid general laughter. But Madame was not appeased. “It is so cruel for a young girl to be discouraged and imposed upon like that; so hard for a mother to see such injustice, and that there is no way but to endure.”

“That is just it, Madame,” said Ezra: “what could you or anybody have done about it? Cyrus Bowker is not poor; he has a splendid farm, he would be rich if he and the most of his children were n’t so pesky shiftless and full of vain imaginations. Mis’ Bowker an’ Sardiny just simply are swimming up stream when they try to get a little forward. My! If Cyrus was a half-way match in stirringness to them two he would have as proper a place there as eye could rest on. Cyrus would n’t have wanted to get that foolish note-money from you, ma’am, for

he'd be duty bound to pay interest on it; and Sardiny's money be just gobbled up, if you'll all excuse the expression."

"I thought that big quiet girl looked rather downhearted when I saw her in church," said Cicely. "She never goes anywhere but to church and to Sunday-school. She brings there a row of children that she has soaped and rubbed till their skins shine."

"Of course she has no time to be visiting round; and where'd she visit?" said Keziah with some asperity. "It is at church she learns to bear other folks' burdens, and to honor her father, if he is n't extraordinary deserving, and to endure with patience. Well, the Lord knows them that are his, and I reckon he'll remember Sardinia for good, if she does n't make any great parade of her goodness. Yes, she does scrub the children's faces, and she makes their clothes and helps her mother, and whatever her hand finds to do she does it with her might, according as says the apostle."

"This work which seems so small, so unproductive, so commonplace," said Mr. Tracy, "may in its sum be greater than many deeds which we count noble. God has his servants and his messengers in many lowly places, and many are the errands which they do for him, without looking for reward or esteeming their service

great. Doing the thing they should because his Spirit dwells within their hearts."

"Your expression, 'errands for God,'" said Mrs. Ainslie, "reminds me of one such errand done by a lad named Duncan, no older than Alec here. It would give me pleasure to read it to you. The incident happened near the home of a friend of mine, who wrote the story out and published it. She sent me a copy, which I have in my room, and I will get it. The story is

"DUNCAN'S ERRAND FOR GOD."

"Jeannie! Jeannie Grant! Whaur are ye? Here is the bonniest wee cock, white as driven snaw, wi' comb an' wattles like rowan berries!"

Searching for Jeannie, Duncan ran into the woodshed. Was that little wailing heap of blue gingham Jeannie?

"Hoot, girl! Dinna greet! Hae ye cut yer-sel'? Luik! Saw ye ever sic a pert, jaunty bantam? I mended his broken leg an' brought him roun' for you!"

"Go away! My heart is breaking! Mother! Darling mother! I can't live without mother!"

"Girl! She's no deid!" said Duncan in an awed tone.

"She's going to die! The doctor told Mrs. Lee."

“Whist! Doctors are sic wise-like folk, they will surely cure her.”

“No; we are so poor we cannot get her cured.”

“Hoot, lass! ye dinna mean to say that physicians, wha hae the verra name o’ our good Lord, the Great Physician, wad withhol’ healin’ juist for lack o’ a little money? I winna be sae weekid as to believe it!”

“There is only one can cure her—he is a great surgeon in New York. If we could get him it would cost five hundred dollars. My mother must die because we have no money! I can’t live without her! I’ll just lie on the floor and not eat or drink.”

“That wad be weekid, Jeannie. The Bible says, ‘Do thysel’ no harm.’ We maun live till God calls us to dee.”

“There’s only mother and me! Every night I slept close to her; she kissed me the first thing in the morning; every evening we said our prayers together. Who would love me?”

Duncan set the bantam softly upon the ground. After a few scornful pecks at the chip-earth in the woodshed it walked out to the grass plat.

“What wull ye do, Jeannie? If you hae no mither, an’ no money, how will ye leeve? You might be bound out!”

At this terrible suggestion Jeannie gave a shriek; her little form suddenly became limp, and she lay unconscious upon her rude resting-place, the wood-pile. Mindful of the sick mother in the house, Duncan softly rubbed her hands, then brought water in the "well-mug" and poured it over her face. Slowly she began to revive.

Duncan, sitting by her, had time for consideration. Duncan was thirteen; Jeannie a year younger—a pretty, delicate girl—and the conviction was borne in on Duncan that she could never endure the lot of an orphan "bound girl."

Since his mother died Jeannie and Mrs. Grant had been the boy's best friends. Mrs. Grant had been his teacher in day-school and Sunday-school. Without her care he might have forgotten the teaching of his own mother. To Mrs. Grant he owed holidays, gifts, home feelings, the thought that some one loved him.

"Jeannie," he said finally, "dinna greet sae. Go to your mither, and dinna darken her heart wi' your tears. Pray to God to send a way o' cure. Ye mind our Lord did miracles for folk, and he is aye the same. Wha kens what he will do for us the noo?"

That evening when the Haltons supposed Duncan to be in bed he was in the village, at Dr. Dodd's office.

“Is it true, doctor, that Mistress Grant wull dee?”

“Yes, my boy; she cannot possibly live over three weeks.”

“Is it true that yon great surgeon-mon in the ceety could cure her?”

“Dr. Krief? I have hardly a doubt of it.”

“Why dinna ye hae him come?”

“It would cost five hundred dollars, and perhaps he could not come for any price. Mrs. Grant is not able to be taken to the city, even if she had the money. It is a hard case, Duncan. Lives are sometimes lost for lack of such poor stuff as dollars.”

Duncan left the office and sat down on the curbstone. The city was fifty miles away. He had in his pocket fifty cents and a biscuit. He rose and walked resolutely along the road. Steadily on went the sturdy little figure, while constellations rose and set. Duncan had been dropping corn all day, and at last his legs fairly gave out. He crawled under a haystack, ate his biscuit, and commended his way to God.

The sun shining on his face woke him. His plan was now to reach a railway station. Arrived there, he asked the agent for “as much ride toward New York as he could get for twenty-five cents.”

The car-ride of ten miles over, Duncan bought

a loaf of bread for five cents, and walked on his way. He had thirty-two miles to go. "Maybe the Lord will give me favor in the eyes o' some mon wi' a wagon," said the boy to himself.

Sure enough, that day he had a ride of over eight miles given to him, and supper besides. He slept in a barn and next morning trudged on, buying his dinner for ten cents, and sleeping at night in the last strawstack before the city limits. Then he spent his last dime for breakfast and inquired the way to the great man's house.

It was office hours, and people were going in. Here a terrible obstacle was encountered—the servant man would not admit him! For nearly an hour, in spite of threats about the police, Duncan hung around the door. He made up his mind that the doctor was in a room at the end of the hall, whither a maid escorted patients. Finally, as the front door opened to admit two people, Duncan braced up his courage, darted by them, rushed down the hall, and into the office like a small whirlwind—the door-keeper after him. There was a big table in the room, and Duncan kept this between himself and the enemy, darting about it like a boy playing at "touch-tag" around a stump, but crying:

"Doctor, let me speak wi' ye! Juist ane word! Dinna let him get me!"

The amazed doctor was about to say, "Take the rascal off, Thomas," when looking down he saw blood wherever the boy's foot trod on the white-tiled floor.

"Stop!" he commanded; and, taking Duncan by the arm, "Boy, what is the matter with your feet?"

"They maun be worn out," said Duncan simply. "I hae walked mony a weary mile to speak wi' ye, doctor, an' I came fast, for there is no ony time to lose. Jeannie Grant's mither is deein' an' no mon can save her but you, to whom the Lord has given, as to King Solomon, wisdom aboon ither men. Dinna let yon mon take me oot until I plead wi' ye for Jeannie's mither, an' then he may put me in jail, or ony-whaur, so ye will go to Burgoss, an' save Jeannie's mither!"

"Tell me about it. Burgoss!—you have walked fifty miles?"

"No: I had a bit ride, but I walked the maist pairt of the way. I came fast too, an' I rin awa'. They wad no hae let me come to save Jeannie's mither! Ye'll no let her dee, doctor?"

A mist gathered over his eyes, his skin paled under its summer tan, his lips blanched, he wavered like a reed in the wind. The doctor lifted him quickly in his arms, and laid him on a couch in an inner room.

"Now drink the beef-tea they will bring you,

and then rest. When my patients are gone we will see what can be done for Jeannie's mother."

There was hope in his tone, and Duncan, lying back "to wait for the doctor," fell asleep.

At four o'clock the doctor had made his rounds and stood by Duncan's side. "Hech!" said the boy, opening his eyes, "I am sleepin' like the sluggard in Proverbs. I am not fit to go the Lord's errands—to gie way to sleep, an' Jeannie's mither deein'!"

"Tell me about her mother."

"Doctor Dodd, sir, at Burgoss, says she maun dee, for no ane can save her but you. She canna be fetched to town, an' she has no money. Jeannie's heart is breakin'; she is but twelve years old, frail like a lily flower, an' has no ane but her mither in a' the warl'. She is not fit to fight for her bread, sir. It's hard for a lad to hae no parents an' be boun' out. I ken it: I am sae mysel'. But a lass child, ye ken, wad find it harder. I could no believe if you heard o' the case ye wad no come. That wad be sae unchristian-like, for a doctor-mon who follows in the steps o' the Great Physician, 'the sympathizin' Jesus.' Ye mind, doctor, the Lord Jesus left his home in glory to heal the souls an' bodies o' sinfu' men for dear love's sake alone. Na doot, doctor, ye are like him, all the day goin' about

doin' good : an' ye will turn aside for ane day, to cure Jeannie's mither ; will ye no?"

This doctor had for long forgotten his Lord ; even when he attended church his mind had been on his "great cases." Jesus had not been the daily friend and pattern of his life. The boy's plea brought to mind his mother's piety ; her prayers, her tears, for him.

The faith of the pleader, in the great man's willingness to help, touched him ; that simple heroism—the little fellow, tired and hungry, traversing those long miles to seek help for "Jeannie's mither"—touched him ; he was a large-hearted man. Never before had the exercise of his profession been knit to Christ ; he had never felt that he was a yokefellow of the "Great Physician."

A deep awe stole over him. Making no reply to the boy, he wrote out a long telegram to Dr. Dodd of Burgoss.

"Ye are goin', doctor?" said Duncan, gently touching his hand.

"Yes. I can go on the midnight train, perform the operation to-morrow, and come back at night."

Duncan sat up, his eyes glowing with joy.

"To-morrow! Jeannie will no greet ony mair! Oh, ye maun feel grand an' happy to save life! That is like the good God! Mrs.

Grant told me I could be a worker wi' God, even in droppin' corn an' potatoes, to help feed the warl', but life-savin' is fu' better. I maun no lie here idle. Haltons will be wantin' me for corn-plantin'."

"How will you get back?"

"I maun walk. I hae no ither way. But my heart is sae light, about Jeannie's mither, I'll win through."

"You ran away, you tell me; what will Mr. Halton say to you?"

Duncan caught his breath.

"Does he beat you?"

"He never did, only maybe a skelp now an' again, if I did no remember, or unnerstan', or went too slow, like. But when I hae lost a week he'll be awfu'! Never mind; I can thole it, sae ye save Jeannie's mither."

"He sha'n't touch you!" said the doctor vigorously, "not so much as with a straw! You shall go back in the cars with me, and first I'll fit you out with a suit. How would you like to be my boy, and live with me, and by and by be a doctor?"

"How could I ever be good eno' to leeve unner the roof o' a mon who is sae like the great, mercifu' Christ!" said the boy, in a low, earnest tone.

Dr. Krief suddenly left the room.

The next afternoon a carriage stopped at Mr. Halton's gate.

"Have you a boy named Duncan Leslie here?" asked Dr. Krief.

"No. I did have him, but the young scamp ran away just in the midst of corn-planting."

"I called to see if you would let me have him."

"You are welcome to him, if you can find him," said Mr. Halton grimly.

"Perhaps you have been at expense for him that I should make good to you."

"Oh, no; the youngster has had his board and a few clothes for the last three years, and went to school, but he has worked well."

"He was a very good, faithful boy, and earned all he ever had," spoke up Mrs. Halton, from the doorway. "He was always mending broken legs of dogs or chickens, or torn combs of cocks, or sores on some of the dumb beasts."

"The truth is, he is with me now. I am Dr. Krief, of New York, and Duncan walked to New York to ask me to come to Mrs. Grant."

"He walked there for that!" cried Mr. Halton, greatly amazed.

"Are you the wonderful Dr. Krief?" said Mrs. Halton. "Will Mrs. Grant live?"

"I think there is no doubt of it. I brought her a nurse from the City Hospital. She owes

her life to this boy of yours, who ran away to get help for her."

"Bless his heart! That was just like Duncan: never to think of himself at all, and if he saw a thing right to do just to go on and do it," said Mrs. Halton, wiping her eyes.

"I declare," added her husband, "that was fine of him! Duncan always was the right sort. And you mean to keep him, doctor? Maybe you 'll make a doctor of him. I'd like to shake hands with him, surely!"

At that very moment in Mrs. Grant's cottage not far away, in the midst of the love and gratitude which made the day the happiest he had ever known, Duncan was whispering over and over again:

"Oh, Lord Jesus, make me fit to follow sae close in thy steps."

"I believe Alec would be something like that!" said Robert when the story ended, and with a gentle sigh of satisfaction at its happy close the hearers thanked Mistress Ainslie for her reading.

"Oh, Robert, dinna say that," said Alec, looking for some shelter for his blushing face. "Sic goodness is far aboon me."

"It is a goodness that it does us all good to hear of," said Mrs. Lyman; "and some way

these two stories told to-night remind me of a young girl whom I knew in London. Her name is Charlotte, and if you knew her I am sure you would think of her with the love and sympathy that I do."

"Make us know her by telling of her," said Miss Eunice.

"It is too late to-night; but as I have not contributed to these stories so far, I will, if you like, read the sketch of Charlotte and some other sketches from a journal which I kept when I was living in London two years ago. I will read them to-morrow evening."

"Nothing could be more interesting than that, I am sure," said Madame Baron.

The clock struck nine; the children were escorted up stairs. As they went Ned asked, "Say, Cicely, did you know that Charlotte?"

"No," said Cicely, "but mamma often mentions her and writes to her. I didn't go to London two years ago. Papa didn't want me to change school, so I stayed with my aunt in Philadelphia, where we lived then. Now Charlotte always seemed to me like a heroine because she belonged to a high family; she was a piece of the nobility."

CHAPTER VII.

HOW VOICES CAME OVER THE SEA.

“But hearing oftentimes
The sad, still music of humanity.”

“I WISH,” said Robert enthusiastically, “that the Big River would last for always. I think we are having the best time: plenty of folks here, no school, enough of reading in the morning to be real interesting, and in the evening STORIES! Ezra, how long will this flood last?”

“Longer than any sensible one wants it to,” said Ezra. “Millions will be lost by it; crops all washed out, cattle drowned, homes carried away, bridges and railroad beds destroyed. It may be fun for you, but terrible serious matters to plenty of folks.”

“I never thought of that,” said Robert. “For how long will it last, though?”

“The river is still rising, but I hope we are getting the last of it. You’ll have your fun for a week longer.”

Ezra was mending the great back gate that opened upon the road, and Robert was sitting on the gate-post watching the process. He had just reported his morning work as finished.

Ezra's friend, Mr. Slocum, came up the road with his big wagon piled with lumber bought from the broken raft. He stopped and spoke to Robert. "Little sir, how would you and your mates like to go with me to my place at Doe Creek, eat your lunch there a-picnic, and come back this afternoon? I have to come back for another load to-day. If you want to try it, better ask the schoolmaster to come too, and bring your lunch, for out at my place bacon and bread are about all our living. We're scarce of women folks!"

"Oh, we'd like to go, fine! Will you wait a minute until I ask and get the lunch? How will we go? Ride top of your lumber?"

"Jounce the bones out of you," said Ezra.

"Your grandma would n't hear of it," said Serena.

"Too heavy for my horses; they've load enough," said Mr. Slocum. "Aren't there riding horses for you?"

"Yes, there are," said Ezra.

Robert dashed off, and came back hurrahing, followed by Mr. Vance, Ned, Ben and Alec. "We're going! Keziah's coming with a basket of goodies. Grandma's helping put it up."

Presently the horses came and the basket. Away started the party. Robert joined Mr. Slocum.

“Why are ladies scarce where you live? Are n't you married?”

“No—not yet,” said Mr. Slocum.

“Then why do you build a house? Men can't keep a house; they do n't know enough.”

“Well, sonny, I'd like to have a house ready in case I ever do get married; and then a farm looks low down and kind o' peeled without a house and some good barns and such. I'm from Pennsylvania, and farmers there are given to keeping things trim and trig.”

“I say, do you see that red house 'way over there—where the ground rises up and the three pines are?”

“Yes, sartain,” said Mr. Slocum.

“Sardinia Bowker lives there; the one the story was about last night.”

“You do n't say so!” said Mr. Slocum, surveying the place with great interest. “Now I'd feel pretty proud if any one wrote a story about me.”

“Maybe there isn't any story about you,” said Robert frankly; “and Sardinia wont feel proud, because she wont probably ever know of it.”

“Maybe I'll tell her some day, if we get acquainted.”

“Will you tell me how so much money comes of pigs?”

“They fetch it. Heard of a man made eight hundred dollars out of pigs, starting from only two pigs, in five years. I remember, because he was a man that made a rule to give one-tenth of all he had to the Lord, and from them pigs he gave eighty dollars to missions.”

“Well, poor Sardinia didn’t have any to give away. She ought to have had hundreds of dollars,” said Robert.

“So she ought,” said Mr. Slocum with energy. “As for stories, sonny, it may be true there is none about me, but I can tell you a story I knew to happen, about a boy—nine-year old, mind you—and a great big bear. If you could get that young lady that wrote about Sardinia to write out my bear story then you’d surprise ’em all with a story some evening.”

“Oh, do, do, do!” cried Robert.

“You listen, then, and don’t forget a thing. I’ll tell it as we get on toward my place.”

“I’m real good at remembering,” said Robert; so the bear story was told, and Robert was in a state of great secret glory and joy, thinking how he would rehearse the tale to Eunice and have it written for the family. His mind returned to this at intervals when Mrs. Lyman brought down a thick book stamped “JOURNAL,” and read three marked places, thus:

“My first sketch I call:

"AN ECHO FROM OVER THE SEA."

It came in a letter. H—— wrote: "I have heard from Charlotte G——. She is heart-broken. Bop is dead." Charlotte is only the faithful factotum of a "genteel lodgings" in London. There is a world of pathos and poetry in these "genteel lodgings" in streets from which society prestige has, within a century, drifted away. There is none of this pathos and poetry in those lodgings freely advertised as "elegant apartments," where in the new streets of the city ex-butlers and ladies' maids, rubicund and vociferous, preside over lodgings.

These people in the genteel lodgings of the decadence have a history, relics and traditions. Take, for instance, Charlotte G——. That G—— bound her to centuries of English annals. The name represented a line once famous. There had been Earls of G——, but they have perished. There are changes of fortune, and families weaken into decay, in the old world as in the new. The elder branch of the G——s lapsed long ago. But the younger house survived and struggled. The block of brick dwellings, in one of which hangs the card, "Lodgings to Let," which hints of the last fight of the G——s for existence—this very block, with its "mews" in the centre, stands where once stood the town

house and grounds of the Earls of G——. Then, when finances were very much run to waste, these houses were built and rented, and finally slipped out of the hands of the family altogether.

Charlotte's great-grandfather went into trade, sat in the House of Commons for the City, leased this house for ninety-nine years, lived high, gave dinners, and died impoverished. His son traded on the remnants of the family name and property, died early, and his widow inaugurated the letting lodgings. She took lawyers of the Inner Temple and "sons of the clergy"—nothing could be more genteel than her house or manners or lodgers, so they tell me.

Her son, Charlotte's father, ran his gamut from early effort and hope to early ruin and despair. Premature marriage, many children, much sickness, a dishonest partner; a history so easily written in that concise form, but, oh, so hard to live! A man old, bent, bald, gray, with the refined manners of the gentlemanhood that had been, he was one of the very many for whom the world has neither work nor room. He lived chiefly in the basement, helping his wife and Charlotte work for the lodgers, and he did the errands, wrote the letters and carried up the meals for a lawyer, an opium eater, who had lodged with Charlotte's grandmother, and

was referred to by the family as "The Third Story Front."

Charlotte's father also washed the windows and did other heavy work in the rooms of the lodgers. When I and mine were known euphonically as "The Drawing-room," I returned one mid-morning unexpectedly from the British Museum. I observed that Charlotte looked embarrassed when she admitted me. Arrived at the first landing, I saw, through the crack of the door, the descendant of the Earls of G—— polishing my drawing-room windows. I stole on to the upper room to avoid distressing him. Presently I heard a soft, swift step on the stairs. I looked over the baluster and saw the gray head losing itself down, down the stairway-well to the basement.

On Sunday evenings Mr. G—— and Charlotte, in their shabby garments, stole to the church around the corner, and the services, music, lights, prayers and sermon comforted them for the week that had gone and gave them courage for the week to come. A week! It was all the future they faced; it was long enough and hard enough surely.

In Paris, in the Rue Rochambeau, our voluble landlady always followed up her statements with "*Mais!*" said with a shrug of her shoulders and lifted hands, all fingers spread. Mrs.

G——'s bits of family history had also this corollary, but, expressed with less pantomime and a world of resignation.

When the girls went to Paris Mrs. G—— came up to solace me with facts and the accompanying but. Mrs. G—— was not a *laudator temporis acti*. How could she be? The past had been like her present. "Mr. G—— was such a good man and educated, of family higher than hers, but once out of work always out." She had "a son, of nineteen, but he was an epileptic. The doctor said he might outgrow it, but—" the poor woman shook her head. Meanwhile the lad, indulged, pitied, allowed to be idle, was the family tyrant. I saw him. He wore a high silk hat, and carried a cane, and used the hard-earned sixpences of his mother and Charlotte for car-fare and cigars.

The eldest daughter had been engaged to a clerk whose salary had been eight pounds a month! "They could have done so well, but—the firm failed; the clerk had only pick-up jobs at present, the marriage was put off, and the promised bride managed a baker's shop up Hampstead Heath way." There was a second daughter, who worked for a dressmaker, and a third was in a cake shop. "One was engaged to a foreign correspondence clerk, but wages were too poor for them to venture on marriage."

On Sundays the three girls and the two lovers came home, and Mrs. G—— made a salad and a pie, and they were cheerful. “Charlotte’s god-mother had educated her to teach in a public school, *but* whenever Charlotte went to be examined she stuttered. Charlotte always stuttered when she was frightened.” “You ladies are so kind to her she does not feel afraid and stutter to you; but to the Board Examiners, dreadful!” However, what would Mrs. G—— do without Charlotte? From six in the morning until eleven at night Charlotte cleaned, carried trays and water and coal, blacked lodgers’ boots at a penny a pair, ran errands, and “minded Bop.” Bop was the last of thirteen, and, when she came, a row of little graves reached between her and Charlotte, and Charlotte’s heart was big enough to welcome Bop!

In order to rent all their rooms the G—— family lived in the basement and slept in “press beds.” Bop saw no sunshine except when Charlotte carried her out as she went on errands. Grown in damp and shadow, an anæmic little creature, I don’t wonder you died, Bop. But to Charlotte you were Picciola to the prisoner; she is heart-broken for you, little Bop!

Charlotte had an outing once, a country day, when she went to public school. Tickets were given them to a farm where grass, a brook,

unlimited milk, tea and butter and curd cheese were afforded, and the visitors carried their own bread and meat. When Charlotte told of the glory of that day I observed that tears stood in the sweet gray eyes of the fair H——, and the black, velvety depths of J——'s eyes took an added softness. They looked out of the window and did not speak. But then their lives had been full of white days; two hemispheres had provided their picnics, and they had not been obliged to carry their own bread and meat.

Poor little Charlotte, pretty and prematurely old! The carpet on which she stood had been a magnificent Axminster, over which, on this carved table, had feasted her parliamentary great-grand sire. The sideboard near her was a Chippendale, so were two of the chairs; the lounge was the cheapest of modern contrivances, with springs and stuffings in chronic disorder. All her surroundings were anomalies, and she tried to cover the hole in the toe of her boot with her too scanty skirt as she sat in St. Something, where, under ponderous tombs, slept her great and useless ancestors. Busy, patient Charlotte! She earned pennies by blacking lodgers' boots—oh how muddy we got them!—and she often gave her pennies to the poor; and when a little child of the washerwoman died Charlotte spent a whole sixpence for a cluster of white

azaleas, because "the mother would feel better if the baby went away with flowers in its hand." I suppose she put flowers in Bop's hand, and I think no one ever prayed "Our Father" more whole heartedly than Charlotte.

"The poor dear girl!" said Madame Baron.

"She is a dear girl," said Mrs. Lyman. "I am expecting a letter from her. I wrote to her two months ago."

"I hope it will come while you are here."

"If it does not I will send it to you."

"I see you have other places marked; you will read on, I hope."

"I wrote these sketches for the pleasure of my mother and sister. This next one opens up a phase of London philanthropic work. I shall be glad to read to you about

"A DAY WITH A LONDON BIBLE NURSE."

"Margaret Thorpe, why will you put your head out of the window—here in a London street, too!"

"Why, I can't be running down to the door every time I hear a street cry, can I?" said Margaret, bringing her brown eyes to bear on Cousin Amanda instead of the street.

"Certainly not; what do you care about those street cries? Common rough people,

bawling horrid little wares, what difference do they make to you?"

"We are two Americans, here in a quiet street of London lodging-houses: no one knows us, or will ever see us after we leave here. What difference does it make if I do put my head out of the window? But as to these cries, let me tell you they represent the last final struggle for bread, the desperate attempt to hold together a home; they are the appeal of a forlorn humanity for human help. Do but look at this man, Amanda; he has on his back and in his hands a lot of the queerest little furniture made out of kindling wood. There, the cook across the way bought one, and a little girl from the corner has come for one. Man!" Margaret waved her hand to the street-vender, and dashed down to the front door. Cousin Amanda shut the window with decision.

"Penny each, miss," said the man, holding out to Margaret queer little bedsteads and chairs, whittled out of kindling wood, put together firmly enough without glue or tacks, the little chairs cushioned with bits of handsome wall-paper pasted in.

"Did you make them?" said Margaret, curiously examining a specimen.

"Yes, miss; me an' the little girl. My wife does the cushions; she's a cripple: she does

this an' button-holes. I sells to the people going to market on Totten'am Court Road Sat'day nights, but las' Sat'day night as was, I hed n't no manner of success, so I come out with these this morning. Penny each!"

"Give me a bedstead and two chairs. There is a sixpence for them. I'd give you more, but that is all the change I have," and Margaret looked regretfully at two gold coins, a guinea and a half guinea—well, no; she ought not to pay those for the little wares. Margaret was seeing Europe under very economical conditions, and wants were so many and great all about her. The toy-seller looked very happy at his sixpence.

"See here, Amanda! Now I call that ingenious; all made out of pine kindling with a knife. His manufactory is his home—a room and a closet—where he lives with wife, baby, nine-year-old girl, and twelve-year-old boy. Stock in trade, a knife and sixpence worth of kindling bundles. The boy works all the week at a paper warehouse, gets three and six (seventy-five cents) and the scraps of paper which he sweeps up, and which make these chair cushions."

"Horrors! how do people live!" cried Amanda.

Margaret set her trophies on the sideboard, where they looked odd beside castors, cut glass water-bottles, and other finery.

“How long will you keep the ugly things there, Margaret?”

“Until the Lord asks for them.”

“Margaret Thorpe! You are absolutely blasphemous.”

“No, Amanda, I am not. Doth God take care for sparrows? I believe that he is in all events, however small. He gave this poor house-father his ingenious idea; he made these common toys the vehicle of sympathy between that poor toiler and me; the mission of this pine furniture is not yet ended. Stand there, little pine toys, until God has need of you. Come!” this last addressed toward the door.

“Please, Miss Thorpe, there’s some one in the hall says the Lady Superintendent told her you wanted her. She is the Bible Nurse of the district, she says—”

“Oh, yes. Ask her up, Rosa. Mrs. Ran-yard’s famous mission; you know, Amanda, I went to the rooms last Friday to give them a couple of pounds.”

“And went without something to do it,” said Amanda.

“You know each district has a Bible Woman, a Bible Nurse, a Lady Superintendent to overlook and help on their work. Then they have a Council of Directresses, a General Secretary, and a Superintendent.”

Yes, Cousin Amanda knew that was a good work. Three countesses, two daughters of earls and two bishops were on the Board of Managers.

Margaret stepped forward to greet a stout, elderly, motherly body, whose black dress was nearly covered by a clean gingham apron and who held in her hand an enormous black merino bag, now in a state of collapse.

“Come in, nurse; I want to hear all about this district.”

The nurse smiled. She did not often pay her visits amid Brussels and mahogany.

“Nurse, would n’t you take me with you for a day on your rounds? Indeed I could help well, and I want to see things for myself. Take me to-morrow. I will fill a bag and be a Bible Nurse for a day.”

“Indeed, miss, you are welcome to go. Can you be ready at eight?”

“Certainly; I and my bag. Be sure and call for me.”

The nurse was at the turn of the stairs when Margaret stopped her. “Wait, nurse, one minute! Can you do anything with these? I just bought them.” She held out the little bedstead and the chairs.

“Be sure I can!” cried the nurse. “I know just the place for them! Why this is a real God-send,” and into the bag went the furniture.

“There!” said Margaret, going back; “I knew, Amanda, that the Lord wanted more service out of those bits of wood. Now for my bag! May I put in the rest of that box of caramels of yours? Thanks. Here’s a little bag of sweet biscuit; I bought them for tea; I’ll go without those. Here’s this little roll of silk and cambric bits that you threw out of your trunk, and those temperance papers, and the dozen lovely cards that came from New York the other day; and oh, the Lord’s Prayer, large print, on muslin, that I bought on the Strand, and this glass of marmalade; and then pins, needles, thread, buttons; I can spare those, and four sixpences from my trunk, and two handkerchiefs. Ah, now I and my bag are ready!”

“What!” said Margaret. “Do you go to such nice places as this?”

Margaret and the nurse had paused at a little well-painted door with a stained-glass panel, and beside the door a window with three pots of blooming flowers. “This is the best-off patient I have,” said the nurse.

An old dame, gnarled and twisted with rheumatism, was sitting in a big chair. Her face was full of content, though every few minutes it was drawn up in a grimace of pain.

“Here’s a lady from America to talk to you while I do up the room,” said the nurse, who

at once began her regular work of dusting the room and making the bed.

“My Jem gets breakfast, and sweeps, and waters the flowers, and keeps the window and the steps clean,” said the old woman. “He sleeps in the little room there. Naught is in it but his cot, for Jem will keep all the things where I am to see. From America, are you! Ah, there’s where every one is rich. I tell my Jem he ought to go there; but la! horses could not drag him away from me! Yes, I’m crippled hand and foot, and I do suffer awful. It’s three years since I’ve walked a step! But the Lord’s been so good, giving me my Jem to do for me the way he does. And here’s nurse, reg’lar as day, comes and tidies me up, and at noon a little lass comes in and mends my fire and feeds me my broth. Jem gives her a penny a day for it. La! when I see she’s clemmed, I often say, ‘There, ’Liza, I can’t eat but half that soup; do you drink the rest and save it.’ It’s all the way I have of doing good, and so much is done for me! The ladies of the Society sent me this good flannel gown last week, and there’s Jem. He works in a stained-glass factory. Do you see the door? He made that of scraps, over hours. You see, when I was first took I fell, and was three months in hospital with a broken hip. Jem came three times a week reg’lar. I feared

he might get led off; but no, he paid up our debts, and papered and painted this room, and made the door and got the flowers, and just before I came home he cleaned the house. He even cleaned under the bed, and that's got a valance and had n't been cleaned under for five years; had it, nurse? And Jem, he cleaned under the bed, and found things I'd lost years."

Nurse had finished her work and was washing the old dame's face and combing her hair.

"You and Jem are death on cleanness," said the dame. "I tell Jem he'll be getting married, but Jem says he'll have no sweetheart but me."

"Here's the Lord's Prayer printed on muslin with a pink border about it," said Margaret. "I'll pin it up on the wall, and this card with a landscape and a temperance text. Jem will like those."

"Ay, that he will, bless you! Come from America!"

Up stairs in a dismal house climbed the nurse. There was an eight-year-old girl "minding" a baby of two months, and three little tots beside, one a neighbor's child, "minding" for twopence weekly. Here the mother was a char-woman, the father in a lunatic asylum for the last six months. Nurse washed the baby and

prepared a bottle for it, washed the children's faces, heard them say their prayers as they stood in a row, and then she aired and helped to "tidy" the room. There was no fire, for economy and fear of accidents.

Margaret gave the little girl-mother a paper with pictures in it and divided the caramels among the children. One was tied in a rag for baby, and three were laid up "for mother." To these Margaret added a sixpence, whereat the child-woman rejoiced.

Now to another one-room home, where by the only window sat a thin woman making button-holes, and on a bed in a corner lay a young girl far gone in consumption. The nurse proceeded to make the invalid and her bed neat, while Margaret sat by the mother.

"Ten hours a day, hard at it," said the woman, "to make a shilling a day. If I fail of that, there is only to starve, for there are four of us: two girls too little to do aught but to go to school, an' her and me. If nurse did't come here to clean up and dress Amy she'd just lie and suffer. She suffers enough now. Nurse!" in a more cheery tone, "there's a nice clean new gown to put on Amy. The Lady Superintendent called and brought her a loaf and three span-new nightgowns."

"Now read me my chapter," said Amy, and

nurse read the fourteenth of John. "I'm never tired of that," said the girl.

"Would you like me to come back and read and sing to you, now and then?" asked Margaret.

"Oh, miss, it would be 'eavenly!"

Margaret made a mental note of coming and bringing some of the food left at her own table. She placed the bag of biscuits and the marmalade on a chair by Amy. "Oh, miss, all that for me! Please make mother eat four of these biscuits to hearten her up! She'd hardly a bite of breakfast."

At the next place behold an old woman propped up in bed, knitting. Beside her on the bed rolled a fat three-months-old baby, laughing at a sunbeam, while tied by a stout cord to the leg of the bed nearest the grandmother was a child of twenty months, who played, rolled, or cried, as suited him, at the end of his tether.

"You see," said the grandmother, as Margaret looked surprised, "if we let him loose he'd get into the water-bucket or the fire, and I could n't get after him or do for him. Now I can drag him back by the cord to feed him or put him to sleep. You see the bread and cold tea are here on the shelf over my head. My daughter goes charring for a shilling a day and her dinners, and she gets in at noon to look

after the baby and mend the fire. I make about eighteen pence a week knitting; that keeps us in coals."

"What does the children's father do?" asked Margaret.

"He's a thief, and he's in prison!" said the woman bitterly. "He's got five years this time, nurse. Poor lad! He was good-natured and good-looking. Never had no chance, that's what he did n't! Baby fat? Yes, he is, and pleasant, like his daddy. Why, miss, are you giving us sixpence! Sarah'll make that buy us meat for three days, bless you!"

Nurse had washed the children, tidied the room, brought some water, and now read the old woman a chapter and offered a prayer with her.

"Makes me feel the Lord ain't forgot us," she said softly.

At the next place the nurse said, "The eldest girl here, seven years old, nearly died of fever, and we have had her two months at our Seaside Home."

This tenement was of two rooms, very clean, light and comfortable, and down stairs. A cheery, clean woman was doing plain ironing, evidently her business.

"Oh, nurse, our little Nell is coming home to-night with the Bible-woman! We're all ready

for her. I went to see my old mistress yesterday and she gave me a rocking-chair and a flannel gown for Nell, and bits of carpet to put in the playhouse the father made for her. See!" she showed a drygoods box, set on its side, divided into two rooms.

"The little boys worked at errands on Saturdays and scraped together sixpence and got a threepenny doll and a twopenny box of pewter dishes and a penny table. I shall find some bits and let Nell dress the dolly, to learn to sew. Wont she be happy when she comes and sees it all!"

The nurse, full of joy, took from her bag the little bedstead and two chairs given her by Margaret.

"Now we are complete!" cried the mother. "I'll make a pillow and mattress this very noon! Oh!"

Margaret went into the depth of her bag. "Here is a roll of pieces for the doll's clothes and bed-clothes."

The good mother clapped her hands. "Wont father and the boys be proud when they see it all! I often admire how the Lord favors us in little things!"

At the next house nurse had a new-born first baby to dress and the young mother to make comfortable, and meanwhile there was a

little talk of the moral and spiritual responsibility newly come into this home, and of the Lord, "who was a great lover of children." Margaret left another sixpence and the sewing materials, and promised to come again and bring baby a frock.

Across the way a mother and grandmother were sewing hard at slop-work, while three or four children sat hungrily about the floor, and on the bed lay a little dead baby, the body waiting for nurse to prepare it for the burial. If the women paused in the work the other children would be without food.

"Of what did the baby die?" asked Margaret.

"Of lack of all things," sighed the nurse; and Margaret's last hope of buying a lovely tile with a copy of the "Angelus" upon it fled as she spread her handkerchief over the small dead face and laid a golden guinea in the little cold hand.

Nurse read some verses aloud from the Bible; the women could at least listen as they worked, and the verses were from Revelation, the favorite portion of these sad, suffering poor. Then all knelt for a minute or two while nurse prayed. Then she and Margaret went to see the parish officer about a coffin. This was Margaret Thorpe's day with a London Bible Nurse.

“We need just such Bible Nurses here in our cities,” cried several. “Is your next extract on the same theme?”

“Not quite, but a story of one man’s great work—the man an editor—and I will tell you about

“AN EDITOR’S VENTURE.”

Frances Hope was wandering through the streets of what the “Post Office Directory” calls “London, E. C.” She came to St. Bride’s street, and presently went up a dark and narrow pair of stairs, opened a dingy door and stood before a low railing which divided a small, gloomy, gaslit room. Behind the railing a clerk wrote letters at a desk, and in a corner a youth and maiden folded and directed newspapers with mechanical rapidity. “Very different from the office of a popular paper in my country,” said Frances to herself, and laid her card on the clerk’s desk.

The clerk opened a gate in the railing, and then turned the handle of the door behind him. Frances considered this an invitation, and entered the inner editorial sanctum as the proclamation “Miss Hope” was made.

The editor had swung his big chair around and was facing a large, rosy, North-country woman, who sat opposite him. Spread out on

the dame's lap was an infant's long frock, and on one of her hands, shut into a large fist, was placed, as on a head, a baby's white cap; on the other hand, as on a clothes hook, hung a little lamb's-wool cloak. "Ain't they sweet!" said the woman, with great pride.

Frances stopped short; this was such a funny spectacle for an editor's office! The editor—he was middle-aged and handsome—sprang up, "Miss Hope? Glad to see you. Mrs. Cave, one of our foster mothers, here after a baby, and by the sounds the baby seems to be coming. They don't usually cry like that; the children of poverty are silent and patient."

Here a big lad came through the door by which Frances had entered; he was very red in the face and carried a baby also very red in the face, and with its mouth wide open. Suddenly introduced to so many strangers, the baby stopped mid-way in a shriek.

"It's all my fault," said the boy. "I hit its head, along of my awkwardness, turnin' of the stairway."

"Bless its heart!" said Mistress Cave.

The editor took the baby, and something in his skilled handling or his genial face comforted the creature into a weak watery smile.

"Here he is; there—go to your mother!" and he put the babe into Mrs. Cave's ready arms.

“Bless him! Why, he’s quite heavy! What’s his name?”

“Whatever you choose. He goes to you homeless and nameless.” Then laying his hand on the child’s head, “You promise solemnly to take this child to train for the service of God and the benefit of humanity?”

“That I do,” said Mrs. Cave heartily; “and if I’m to name him I’ll call him Joe, after my man, and that will make him proud.” She slipped a bit of barley sugar into the child’s mouth and proceeded to look him over.

“I believe he’ll be real handsome when he’s fattened up a bit. I should n’t wonder if his hair would curl—yes, he’ll be a brave lad when he gets hearty, and out in the country he will get hearty, though he is peaked now.”

“He’ll thrive, I’m sure. I am surprised at the vigor these poor waifs show. Only two have died, so far.”

“I must get off to my train,” said Mrs. Cave, and so slipped the white frock on over the baby’s clothes. “He’s real clean, sir; well washed surely.”

“Oh, yes. As soon as a child is made over to me by the court I send it to a good woman—wife of one of our printers. She washes it, dresses it in any clothes that my friends have sent in, and feeds it well until the foster mother gets

it. I like the poor things to start in their new life fairly."

"I'm no foster mother; I will be its own mother. There now; don't the hat and cloak become the dear! Wont my Joe be proud of him! I'll write you, sir, and come and see us when you can."

With a handshake for the editor, and a courtesy for Frances, Mrs. Cave disappeared with her baby.

"Number what?" asked Frances.

"Sixty-eight!" cried the editor triumphantly.

"And only two dead?"

"Only two."

"And any sent back on your hands?"

"Well, one, a girl seven years old, came back three times. The home kept her a week, then sent her packing, as she was demoralizing the other children. The next people who took her returned her in a fortnight as 'she had nothing lovable in her.' The third family who proposed her adoption held out for a month, and then found her noise so wearing on an old and feeble grandmother that they could not keep the child. Finally, an ex-governess on an annuity took her and she has kept her, and is expecting to make a decent woman of her."

"Any other disasters?"

"A boy two years old, given up by father,

mother said to be incurably insane. At the end of a year the mother recovered and demanded him. The foster-parents were much grieved."

"That leaves sixty-four permanent adoptions, without any trouble, in—how long?"

"Five years," said the editor. "See now, here is a box of pictures and letters from our adopted parents. Read them, look at them, while I see to my mail."

Frances looked over two or three dozen photographs and tin-types of little jolly comfortable-looking children. The letters were from people in all walks of life. This daintily-written document spoke of "dear Marie's nurse," that other of "a consolation to my widowed heart," and "soon shall need a good governess." This was one from a minister who had "adopted a sister for a family of boys;" this from a country banker who found "the bright adopted boy a great treasure to his hitherto brotherless girls." But most of the letters were from plain, middle-class people; shop-keepers, farmers and mechanics. Some letters were from families who had emigrated with the adopted child to Australia, Canada, or the United States; one was from an army sergeant in India.

"Dear child," "Great joy," "Well loved," "Great comfort," "A blessing," these were the expressions.

The editor had finished his mail. "Please tell me how it began," said Frances.

"Over five years ago some one sent for my paper a little story about two street Arabs, bits of lads, who had neither shelter nor friends, but loved each other. The younger was arrested for stealing—a biscuit! The elder, to prevent a separation, boldly avowed that 'he had took lots of things, apples and biscuits, and a tart.' The judge, surveying the small culprits with pity, said, 'Take them to the prison together, and have them kept together.' At the prison they were well washed, barbered, clad in clean night clothes, fed sumptuously on hot soup and a stale roll, and put into two hammocks slung in a cell side by side, each provided with a warm blanket. As the jailer closed the door he heard one say, 'Ho! Bob, ain't this fine! Wisht we'd stay here forever; do n't you?' The story closed by asking: 'What is to become of these little lads? They cannot stay in the prison forever.'

"Now, though only a pathetic tale, founded on fact, this story had such verisimilitude that a childless Cornish farmer wrote asking to adopt those two lads, 'and make men of them.'

"That letter overwhelmed me when I thought of the real children that needed just such offers. I could not suffer so much philanthropy to go to waste. I wrote to the famer, offering to send

two equally needy boys though not the ones mentioned. I sent two little lads found by the aid of a kindly policeman. In a month came a letter of hearty thanks and good news. Then I wrote an editorial on 'Childless Homes and Homeless Children,' and told what this good man had done, and offered to provide other children for other homes. God sent my words home to many hearts. In a week five offers to adopt homeless children came. The work grew. I had offers of homes for children and appeals in behalf of children left destitute by the death, desertion, insanity or criminality of the parents. The police, the city missionaries, Bible women, or poor neighbors, found the children, the columns of my paper found the parents. The responsibility of the proposed parent must be guaranteed to me by a minister and a magistrate. I place children only in Christian families."

"And what rules do you have for this work?"

"Christian people, who are willing really to adopt the child, who take it without receiving a word of information as to its birth or parentage. I don't want the poor ones handicapped, when they grow up, by stories of their infancy. Let them start fresh and fair. As to the children, they are to be between one day and five years old, and made over to me for adoption by the magistrate. Usually the proposed parents come

for the child. Sometimes I have to find some one to take it to its home. I correspond, as you see, with them all. I visit some of the homes, my wife and some friends visit others; the clergymen near visit the rest, and report. Now and then some one gives me a pound, or two, or five, for the first expenses. That drawer there is never full, but never empty: I have enough for the very few charges entailed by the work. And what a work! Sixty-eight saved children!"

Frances Hope went down the dingy stairs, and along St. Bride's street, thinking with how very little red tape, and how very little money, sanctified common sense and Christian love can do a great philanthropic work.

"That editor is a man after my own heart," said Mr. Danforth; "plain practical common-sense, that works with the tools it has and does good deeds without bravado or self-praising! God speed his work, I say! I wish I could shake hands with him."

"And it is all true," said Miss Eunice. "Emphatically and exactly true."

"I wish we could have some more of it," said Mr. White. "I am glad to treasure up what good, earnest, quiet workers are doing for God and for humanity. Then when I tell others it may suggest to them that they in their several

corners can do their especial work, and find work to do if they look closely at need and opportunity."

"That same editor had another venture which much interested me," said Mrs. Lyman; "it is written of in this same note-book. I kept this book for my mother's benefit, as she is deeply interested in all benevolent schemes."

"Please read the other venture, then, my dear," said Madame; "we are all anxious to hear it."

"Very well, if I am not occupying more than my fair share of time," said Mrs. Lyman.

"You are praising another's work, not your own, so give us the story without fear."

ANOTHER VENTURE OF THE EDITOR.

Frances stood looking out of her window. Her lodgings were in Gover Street, simple lodgings, of a quiet, safe, old-fashioned pattern. She was waiting for the postman. She wanted to see her mail before she went out, and meanwhile she looked up and down the street and considered what she might do. She might spend the day at the British Museum, or she might go to Windsor. It was just the day to idle about Hampton Court, or to go to Hampstead Heath and lose one's self in rural spaces. There, however, came the postman, and the lit-

the maid of the lodgings, whose dull existence was greatly brightened by Frances' smiles, came up with a letter.

It was from that enterprising editor—briefly: “Will you come and be one of my scrap-book prize committee? You may be interested. Be at the office at ten.”

Frances had never heard of the “scrap-book prize,” but she had ample faith in her ability to do whatever she was requested to do. The editor was given to original ideas; no doubt here was one of them. Certainly she would go. It was now eight; she could spend an hour among the Museum marbles and be at the office early enough to be enlightened as to her duties.

Arriving at the office she found its small space yet further narrowed by a row of tables, constructed of boards on trestles, set around the wall and covered with white cotton cloth. On these improvised counters, or tables, lay a rainbow assemblage of bright, shining, merry-colored, merry-shaped be-ribboned things, which reminded one of St. Valentine's Day, or of a wholesale Christmas card *dépôt*. Fortunately the editor was alone. He stood in the middle of the room and surveyed rapturously these treasures.

“Tell me all about it,” said Frances.

“First, look at them. Did you ever see

scrap-books so pretty, and of such varied designs?"

Frances and the editor began a slow pilgrimage of examination.

"See here! This one is a palm-leaf fan tied with a bow, bound with ribbon, and on both sides large-print texts of Scripture—think of that for some feeble old person! There is one on muslin, the edges of the leaves pinked, the pages filled with bright child-scenes; an indestructible one that! Here is one made on square gilt-edged cards—in a box. Here is one solidly bound in cloth—little tales, texts, poems and pictures mingled! This one is all made of nice engravings; this is a comic one, all in black and white; and here is a comic one bound in motley, and filled with colored cuts. Look at this one, a cloth roll in a tube; it pulls out slowly, making a panorama of lovely pictures! Here is one bound in silk, and filled with rhymes, slumber songs, and little poems, each carefully and fitly illustrated. Here is one entirely of Scripture scenes—all the incidents in the lives of Joseph, Moses, Daniel and John the Baptist. Here is a beauty: a large fan of heavy cardboard, tied with silk cords, every fold of the fan a different picture on each side."

"Yes, it is all beautiful, ingenious—but how did it come about, and how many are there?"

“Two hundred and one! And how it came about was in this way. I offered in my paper three prizes, first, second and third, for the nicest scrap-books. The competition to be open to all, old and young, subscribers or not; and the scrap-books after the decision to be distributed among the hospitals. The committee of award will be yourself and two other ladies; the prizes are—first, a pound; second, a handsome book; third, a year’s subscription to my paper. I expect the other ladies of the committee each moment. After you have made your decision, and I have had the pleasure of serving to you tea and buns, you are to go in a cab and distribute the scrap-books in the Children’s Hospital, the Hospital for Incurables, the Maternity, and some others. The ladies whom I am expecting are well acquainted with our hospitals, and I think the visits paid with them will be of great interest to you.”

“They will be so, indeed,” said Frances; “and as I am to help choose for prizes, and divide for the hospitals, I might as well be getting acquainted with my work.”

The other members of the committee presently arrived: a white-haired, noble-hearted elderly lady, and a woman of middle age dressed in deep mourning and bearing traces of great sorrow. The editor had told Frances about her.

She lost her husband, mother and two children within a month, and instead of shutting herself up with sorrow, as the manner of some is, she had taken the unhappy to her heart, and went about doing good.

The editor departed to the outer office and the three began their work.

“How much of earnest and ingenious thinking these represent in their making!” said the old lady. “I cannot feel that they were ‘made just to take prizes.’ Here are dozens evidently prepared with no expectation of a prize at all; but solely with the hope that in the hospitals they might give help and pleasure. Look at this one: the work of a child, and evidently of a rather poor child; some of the pictures have been carefully cleaned with bread crumbs; most of them are cheap advertisement pictures, and some of the edges are not quite evenly trimmed. But how much pity for children in hospitals has been worked into this humble little book! I think some invalid made this light one of large-print texts. I seem to see prayers, like angels, hovering around them all, and binding the heart of unknown giver to unknown receiver.”

“And think of their history in the years to come,” said the pupil of sorrow. “These will last a long while, doing their work. What messages of hope and forgiveness may go to perishing

ones in these texts and hymns! What long hours of pain will be lightened and shortened by these pictures and stories! How forlorn little ones, who have never had anything pretty or bright to hold, will cling to these! We cannot count the great harvests that may rise even from such poor, insignificant seeds; love and prayer and faith are the sun, soil and rain for sowing like this."

And at last the three prize books were selected and laid on the editor's desk until their owners should be discovered, and the scrap-books were sorted for five hospitals. Then the editor came in, and a boy from an adjacent cookshop brought a tray of tea, cake and sandwiches. After that little refreshment the cab came, and the three ladies and the five parcels of scrap-books were taken around to the hospitals.

That was an afternoon of experiences to Frances. Such sadness, patience, pity, courage, with darker shadings of remorse or despair, as filled up the canvass of the day, until the night began to fall! The gray-haired lady asked her coadjutors to come home and take tea with her.

"It seems," she said, "as if I had to-day met those of whom I would not willingly lose sight. That tall girl—only support of an old father. She will go out to the world again crippled. It means even more to her than to most to have

a limb amputated. Fear of starvation is on her face. Something must be done for her."

"I will take her first to sew for me for a month," said Frances. "She can have good meals and good pay. When that month is ended you may have found other patrons for her."

"Those two little children—the girl and boy orphans—shall find their home at my fireside," said the widow. "I thought I heard a voice saying, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.'"

And so the evening grew late ; they planned, and in their hearts and for other lives grew some further harvests of the "editor's venture."

CHAPTER VIII.

A LONG RAINY DAY.

“ Men die, but sorrow never dies,
The crowding years divide in vain,
And the wide world is knit with ties
Of common brotherhood in pain.”

ON Wednesday the elders of the party at Madame Baron's gathered at the breakfast table with rather gloomy countenances. Mr. Vance was disturbed about the long lapse of school work in his Academy; Mr. White found all his appointments disarranged by his enforced delay; Mr. Tracy had two weddings at which he should be present, but would be notoriously absent; Mr. Danforth's business could ill afford this stay; Mrs. Lyman, Mrs. Hastings and Mrs. Danforth were anxious about the state of their houses and the hindrances to spring work. Only the children were thoroughly contented, and as they looked out of the windows and saw the black skies and the rain falling in torrents, and remembered that it had rained all night, even the children felt that the day was a dull one and the prospect for a falling river very poor indeed.

However, none of Madame Baron's guests

were so heathenish as to grumble at the weather, or to allow themselves to be made miserable on account of it. They would indeed have rejoiced in sunshine, and to see the river within its proper bounds; but they cheerily concluded to make the best of things as they were.

An unusual amount of work seemed to be needed that morning from the children; then Mr. Vance made the morning reading longer and more interesting than usual, while Cousin Eunice brought from what Madame Baron called the "emergency closet" four or five new games, which had been there hidden for exactly such discouraging weather as this particular Wednesday. About three o'clock every one had talked, read, sewed, played, until they were all tired of each of these proceedings; moreover, the day was so dark that reading was trying to the eyes. Said Madame, "Let us vary our order of entertainment to-day, and have an afternoon story."

"To fit the day it would need to be of a sad, stormy nature," said Eunice; "something like Longfellow's rain song. Come, Cicely, let us sing that, while all our friends put on their thinking caps and search their brains for something pathetic, tender, melancholy."

Eunice seated herself at the piano; Mr. Vance, Cicely, Mrs. Lyman and Mr. Tracy stood about her and sang:

“ The day is cold and dark and dreary ;
It rains, and the rain is never weary ;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

“ My life is cold and dark and dreary ;
It rains, and the rain is never weary ;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

“ Be still, sad heart ! and cease repining ;
Behind the clouds the sun is still shining ;
Thy fate is the common fate of all :
Into each life some rain must fall ;
Some days must be dark and dreary.”

“ I know a story that would just fit that song, and this day,” said Mr. Danforth: “ first the sorrowful facts, the loss and pain ; then the spirit despondent, broken, repining ; then, the comfort of God coming in, patience, resignation, hope set in the beyond. Emma, it is that story of the fishermen which you wrote long ago.”

“ Oh, Henry ! I am sure that is not much of a story ; and now that you have said what would cause people to expect something good I should be ashamed to read it.”

“ I did n't know you ever wrote stories, Mrs. Danforth,” said Cicely Lyman.

“ I do not, my dear. The year after I left school I spent the summer at a little seaside

village, and there one of those sea-tragedies occurred, which so often happen, and touched me deeply. I wrote it out into a story. My father was the owner of a book-bindery in the city, and as he was well pleased with my story, and very indulgent to me in all things, he had my tale printed, and then bound—one dozen copies only; and very beautifully bound they were, in pale sea-green with silver edges, and the side-stamp trails of sea weeds. We had it ready for my mother's birthday gift. Of course I have carefully kept a few copies; my children will like them; but equally of course I did not bring my precious brochure with me when I fled here from the rising waters."

"My dear Emma," said Madame, "have you forgotten that I was one of those who received a copy of your only literary work? Or do you suppose that I valued it so little that I have lost it, or that I have worn it out with reading? It is in the drawer of the oak bookcase at this very minute, and I propose to get it out so that there shall be no excuse about reading it."

"There, now," said Mrs. Hastings, "the tables are very well turned on you, Emma; and thanks to Aunt Baron and your husband we are to have a story just suited to the day."

"Very well," said Mrs. Danforth. "I will read it on the supposition that in our dearth of

occupation to-day anything will be better than nothing. All I have to say of it is that it is true, and happened during the summer when I was making holiday on the little island where the scene of the story is laid. As the outside of this booklet is decidedly better than the inside I will pass it around first, for you to admire the covers. I think my good father flattered himself that with so very much encouragement I would make authorship my profession, and become a shining light in literature. My gifts did not lie that way, but entirely in the line of domestic occupation, and my only literary work remains,

“A STORY OF TWO POOR FISHERMEN.”

“I pray you hear my song of a boat,
 For it is but short :
 My boat, you shall find none fairer afloat,
 In river or port.
 Long I looked for the lad she bore
 On the open, desolate sea ;
 And I think he sailed to the heavenly shore,
 For he came not back to me.”

Beyond the blue sun-kissed waters of Northumberland Straits there lies a low green island lovingly lapped by the cool waters of the north, set apart from all the world, and, until within the last century, by all the world forgotten. The little island has had no active part in his-

tory: no saint has here seen visions, as on Patmos; no poet has sung it into fame, like the isles of Greece; it has not, like Corsica, flung a thunderbolt among the nations. It has had its tragedies and its comedies, its heroes, its joys, and its heartbreaks; but they have been those of humble life, and have gone down, under the spray-salt sods of the little country churchyards, buried in the hearts that suffered them.

For a little band of Americans, who came yearly from Cape Ann to fish along this coast, one of these tragedies began on a September evening when all the north-western shore was transfigured by the glory of the setting sun. The great red clay cliffs stood up in the crimson light like walls of ruby; the bare, storm-scathed pines that fringed the bold foreheads of these cliffs were for the time lit up into bright shadows of that bush that burned unconsumed; all the broad sand beach below the headlands gleamed like the priceless dust of jewels; the line of treacherous rocks that ran out here and there had little pools, left by the retreat of the morning tide, and these pools were red like blood; so was the sea red in a broad track between the land and the crimson clouds, and on either hand the red softened to purple, and faded into a dull blue, far out of reach of the evening splendors.

Along the smooth beach came a strongly-built, quick-stepping young woman of twenty-five; healthful, dark, courageous, she looked a true daughter of sun and sea. Her abundant black hair was caught up in a loose knot with quite as much careless grace as the locks of her sisters in the cities; a gay-hued handkerchief was loosely knotted about her full throat; her sleeves rolled up showed arms round and strong; she was bare-headed, because she was warm; shoeless and stockingless, that she might walk easily over the sand; she had pinned her best green gown high up over her short, striped petticoat, and on she came, along the shining sands below the burning cliffs, a model of vigor and cheerfulness. Over the glowing sea she cast long, happy glances, and with her thoughts straying further and further out on the waters her steps became slower, and as she reached a deep curve in the shore, where the sand line was broad and smooth, she searched for a mussel-shell, to try the fisher-maidens' favorite superstitious charm.

As we may divine, this stalwart damsel's lover was far out with a fishing-schooner, and now she was going to challenge the fates for a promise of his safe return. The maid was wise in her generation: she eyed the tide now rising to see how nearly it was in; she considered of

the time of the moon and of the height of the water yesterday. She would risk no unfavorable oracle and a sleepless night. Then she knelt on the beach and wrote with the shell her lover's name in the sand—only "Tom Turner," but the romance of her life was in the letters of the common name—and throwing away the purple and silver shell wherewith she had clearly shaped these letters she went back into a hollow of the cliff and sat to watch what would come. She clasped her shapely brown hands behind her head as it rested against the red clay, the drifted sand, scattered with sea-weeds, and purple mussels, being a familiar seat to the fisher-maid; the light changed her smooth, sun-darkened skin into a rare warm bronze.

Up came the tide, the white foam beads enviously curling near the flourishing capital T's, then creeping away ashamed. The girl shut her eyes to count a thousand—that done, she would see if the name were gone or if the tide were slipping back and leaving it unharmed, an omen of Tom's safe return. Meanwhile a younger woman came slowly along the sand from an opposite direction. She had an anxious, almost fretful expression; but as she turned the corner of the rocks that formed the dark girl's grotto of divination her face brightened, as she cried out:

“Why, Bessie!”

Bessie opened her eyes.

“Sit down — I’m seeing if Tom’s coming back safe. Will you write Joe’s name?”

“No; let it be,” said the woman, sitting down wearily; “I do n’t believe they’ll ever come home safe. I just feel as if the Susan was doomed for this trip.”

“Bless you, girl! that’s only ’cause you’re poorly and in low spirits. You’ll laugh at yourself by the time Joe and your mother get in safe. Folks are always having whims like that, but they never make out anything. Did you get lonesome because I was away this afternoon?”

“Yes—no—the parson’s lady called for more than an hour.”

“Oh, I believe the tide is turned, and Tom is all right!” cried Bessie, jumping up to look at the damp water-mark just below her inscription on the sand. “Turned, as sure as you live, just at the edge of the letters!”

“If it shows anything, it shows he’ll just miss being lost. Did you choose the spot with your eyes shut?” asked the young woman, rousing to a little interest.

“Yes; I whirled three times, shut my eyes, and then wrote straight out from where I began.”

“Well, if you'd written Joe's name you would have put it first, you know you would, and it would have been rubbed out.”

At this imputation Bessie laughed, and to turn the dismal current of her companion's thoughts asked, “What did the parson's wife say for all that time?”

“Oh, the old talk about piety; as if I had n't enough to think of now without vexing myself with things I can't see! I says so to her. Says she, ‘It would give you an easy mind.’ It would be hard havin' an easy mind, I told her, with Joe here and there on the sea, as I fear and hate with all my heart!”

“Do n't hate the sea!” laughed the buoyant Bessie; “why, it made Joe's living and mine from the time we was little ones, when our father died in his bed with fever—'stead of in the sea as a sailor should.”

“Yes, but your mother had the comfort of his last word and look,” said the pensive sister-in-law.

“And she caught the fever and died,” said the practical Bessie.

“Poor Joe!” sighed Joe's little wife.

“And poor Bessie!” said Joe's merry sister; “we were in the same boat, and we had a hard pull of it. We ran about bare-legged among the fishers, buying trays of fish and carrying

them to town on our heads to sell. Then Joe went out fishing, and I sold the fish; and winters we kept one of the wreckers' houses in the gully, and a power of drowned men we handled one way or another, and many of them we saved and some we could n't, and that was how I came across Tom, when the poor fellow looked as dead as a door nail. There now, he came to and we are to be married! And Joe captain of a schooner, and you for his wife. Shame on your sober face, Mollie! We'll be as gay as crickets when the Susan gets in and the baby has come."

"Yes; the parson's wife, says she, 'Do n't you want to be a Christian mother to your little one when it gets here?'

"I told her I laid out to be a good mother, like my own before me, and she was n't pious; we all do well enough in our way, I'm sure."

"Well, I think Tom Turner is as good a fellow as you'll find, and it would n't do for me to get pious on his hands, for he says he hates cant, and does n't believe a word of it!" said Bessie.

"When I told her how I hated the sea says she to me: 'Would n't you like Him for your Father that holds the sea in the hollow of his hands, and hears all that cry to him on wave or shore?'"

“Why, what did you say to that, girl?”

“I told her the truth: that I felt afraid of Him, and heaven looked kind of fearsome, so high up and far off; but I'd talk to Joe, and if he tried religion I would with him, but not else.”

Poor Mollie drooped her head against Bessie's strong shoulder, looking more than ever shy and gentle and anxious in contrast to that dashing maiden.

“Don't trouble your head,” said Bessie; “if the Lord is good and kind—and of course he is—he'll give us success while we do our best.”

The two rose and walked slowly along the way Joe's wife had come. They had not gone far when an ungainly, cross-eyed, bow-legged man shambled by them in haste. Mollie drew close to her siser.

“How I fear that awful man!” she whispered nervously.

Bessie laughed in sheer merriment.

“Fear that poor crooked old soul! Why girl, where's the harm in him? He wont touch you!”

“Not fear for myself, but for Joe: to think of Joe's life being in his hands.”

“It isn't in his hands; how can it be? Joe's life is in his schooner, a good sound boat; and he knows how to manage her, and so does Tom. Life in his hands!”

“Yes, it is. He keeps the light-house, and he is stupid, and slow, and queer; and just think of the rocks along this coast, and all the ships and the men trusting to a light-house kept by that crooked creeping thing, that never kept a light-house before. Oh, Bessie, Bessie!”

“I declare you’re crying! What a silly child; you are not one bit like yourself. Come on home and let me put you to bed; you’ve walked too far.”

Bessie put her strong arm about her sister-in-law and accommodated her swift long steps to Mollie’s more quiet pace. The fierce red had died out on land and sea. Little black-headed sheldrakes perched on ledges of the cliffs, and peered down at the sisters. The gulls whirled in wide circles near shore, and the broad-winged gannets swept out, out afar, toward a mass of black cloud into which the sun had dropped suddenly, and which now grimly shut up all the glory of the west.

“The Susan should have got in yesterday,” said Mollie.

“Wind the wrong way,” said Bessie, cheerfully.

“Only think, Joe and my mother and your Tom—all we care for—on board one little ship,” continued Mollie.

“Well, it’s a little ship that has always come

in safe and well-loaded, and you know this summer has been about the best fishing that ever we have had, and prices high at home: we'll go back to Cape Ann quite rich, girl, and some day we'll all club together, you and Tom and Joe and I, and we'll buy the little white house on the Cape, where we can see all the ships go by, and we'll live like princes; won't we?"

"Oh, did I tell you?" said Mollie, rousing cheerfully: "the parson's wife brought me such a sweet little dress and blue cloak, with a hood to it, and made me take the present; they are so pretty!"

"There, that was more like sense than her preaching; but she's a good woman, and thinks she ought to do the preaching."

They came out of the shelter of the cove, and a fierce sweep of wind rushed on them from the sea, almost taking their breath.

"A storm! I knew it, I knew it; and see the white-caps away off! Oh, Bessie, what shall we do!"

"Nonsense, child! was there never a storm before?" said Bessie, stopping to watch the long rollers that began to break on the beach. "The bonnie white horses! I've played with them many an hour. Look, Mollie, how grand! See them coming up into the bay."

“It will kill my Joe and my mother,” said Mollie, covering her face, as she fell to sobbing.

“Never a bit. The Susan can ride out a sea ten times as high. She knows the port, and will have the light; and with this wind at her back, and Joe or Tom at the wheel, she’ll run in as light as a bird.”

Still Mollie sobbed on, refusing to be comforted. Patiently aiding her steps, and striving to cheer her, Bessie led her on to their plain little home, not a quarter of a mile from the light-house, toward which the keeper could be seen making his way over the rocks.

One room below stairs and two above was the little dwelling put up by these wanderers from Massachusetts for their summer home.

It was clean and weather-proof, and that was about all; for these people were poor, and were saving all they possibly could of their hard-won gains to establish themselves comfortably on their native coast. The vision of a white cottage, with window blinds and a carpet for the best room, hung before them like a pleasant picture in this bare abode. The floors were clean scrubbed, the bed beautiful from its neatness, the curtains to the windows were newspapers, fancifully cut in festoons and open work, and the furniture was chiefly of their own manufacture.

A huge old-fashioned bandbox held a rainbow assortment of patchwork, the work of Bessie for her future home, while near Mollie's "barrel-chair" stood a big basket filled with carpet rags, and balls of the same well cut and sewed.

"Have done with your dumps," said Bessie. "I'll get supper, and you'll see our folks home to breakfast."

"It will be so dark and rough," said Mollie, looking anxiously toward the gray light-house tower; "why does n't he light that lamp?"

"He will; it is early yet," said Bessie, stirring about the stove, and then, while her kettle was boiling, going to bring a basketful of shavings and chips for the morning fire.

The night shadows fell swiftly. The tireless Bessie lit her lamp and forced her despondent sister to the table.

"Eat your supper, girl; do n't you see the light-house lamp is lit? That's all right."

"It does n't half burn, seems to me," said Mollie.

"That is only because your ideas are so large to-night. Why, child, rather than have you worry so, I'll run over and scare that old scarecrow in his den and look after the lamp myself. Say the word, Mollie."

"No, do n't go," said Mollie. "I guess I'm tired and cross, and with the trouble of all our

folks in one boat, when I always was afraid of boats and of the sea."

"And married a sailor!" cried Bess.

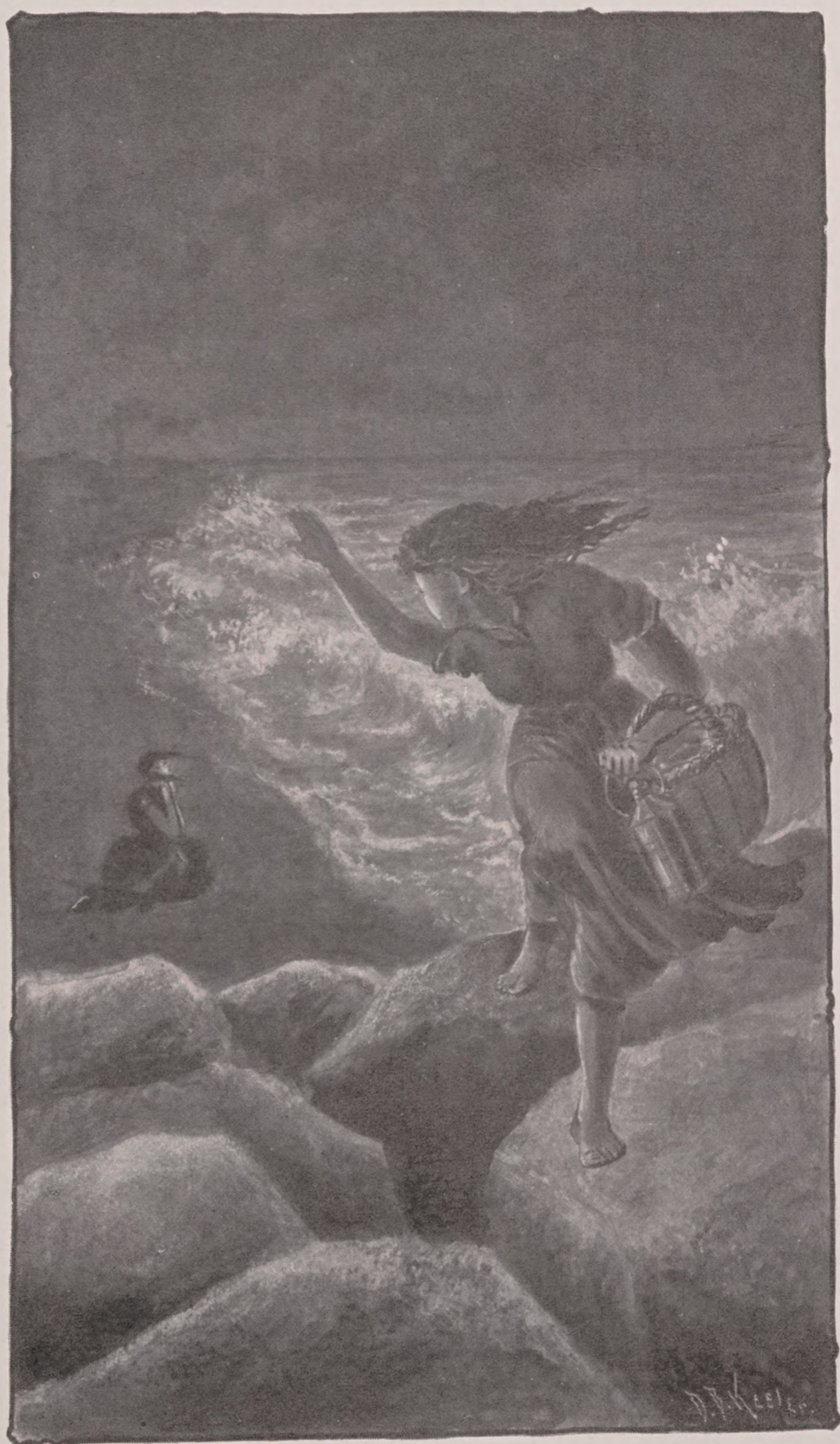
"So I'll go to bed early, and feel better tomorrow; only you must sleep with me, Bessie, for I feel afraid."

"All right," said Bessie, "only Joe'll be coming home before morning, and drive me up stairs."

Mollie Wentworth was indeed tired out; exhausted in mind and body, she soon was lost to all consciousness of the rising storm. Bessie, accustomed to the sea, fearless by nature and with firm faith in her brother and lover, and in the Susan, slept soundly until suddenly aroused by her sister, who started up with a shrill cry, "They are drowning! They are drowning! Joe! Mother!"

In an instant these two young women were on their feet; they heard the pounding of the surf like the tramp of hosts, the beat of drums, and the wild clangor of trumpets along the shore. The wind screamed madly about their roof, the night was black as the grim caverns of the ocean's depths. They rushed to the door, looked where the light-house should blaze with safety to all that coast—and the light was gone!

They had but one thought: the beacon must be re-lit—perhaps the lives of their loved ones



hung on that vanished flame. Bessie caught her basket of kindlings, thrust a box of matches into her pocket, and having huddled on her clothes, she knew not how, was soon flying along the shingle, her shavings protected by her ancient water-proof mantle, and an oil-can in her hand, bumping against rocks and trees as she took her headlong way. Poor Mollie forgot her weakness and fatigue as she stumbled, half-clad, after her stronger sister. Bessie forgot her for a time, but when she reached the low line of rocks running out into the sea, among which the waves were clashing and boiling, she stopped to shout to her to go back. In a lull of wind and water she heard Mollie cry to her to "go on." Well, she would go on. Mollie was not likely to hurt herself past remedy, but six lives might be lost in one little schooner beating along an unlighted coast.

Here was the light-house door; the latch-string had been drawn in; Bessie fumbled a second, calling aloud, but the next instant she set her strong shoulder against the door and burst the shabby fastening.

"Man! Man! Nick Hays! where are you? Your light is out!"

That was Nick Hays shuffling on the stair, and Bessie rushed against him and threw him backwards as she hurried up.

"It wont burn," gasped Nick. "I don't understand it. I can't manage the oil."

"Come up," cried Bessie, pressing on: "for the love of heaven, how long has it been out?"

"I don't know. I found it out when I came up. I was going for a light."

They were up in the tower, and Bessie lit some of her shavings. The lamp looked hopeless enough. Bessie piled up fuel on the brick floor, and poured some oil on it. The broad red blaze spread out, a glorious beacon, over that black sea.

Mollie saw this in her last painful steps before she reached the door, and came up weeping, trembling, and blessing Bessie.

"Oh, you poor soul!" said Bessie, still tending her fire, "go down and get into the bed; Nick and I will keep this light up."

But how could Mollie sleep, when even now those she loved the best might be tossing up and down on the cruel waters, at the very point of death? She crouched in a corner, and presently Bessie found time to strip off the poor thing's wet dress and wrap her in a bed-quilt.

So until morning Bessie watched, sleepless as a vestal guarding and feeding a sacred fire, meanwhile encouraging her sister, and anon in good strong Saxon execrating Nick, who, when lives were to be lost or saved, could let his light

go out while he was asleep. Nick's cross-eyes glared, but he scrambled up and down, obeying Bessie's orders like a whipped cur.

Poor Bessie! She gave orders with a fainting heart, for all through the night as she gazed out into the gloom she saw no Susan speeding into port, with dripping sails spread wide, like a storm-beaten bird gaining its nest.

So the gray day dawned, and as Bessie, with chill fingers, steadied the light-house glass and swept the horizon in search of her brother's craft she caught no welcome glimpse of hull or spar.

No need to stay longer. The dull sunless day lay with equal light on land, and sky, and sea. All now to be done was to go wearily home, and wait, and weep, as is too often woman's portion in this world. So she took Mollie by the arm, and they two went back the way they had come, to find the home cold and lonely, the door blown open, and the rain beaten across the floor.

All day Bessie worked about the house, and ran along the cliffs, looking through her spy-glass for the schooner's sails. We know she was one who could not pray for her beloved; she could only look vaguely up to the lowering sky and wonder if Omnipotence could suffer ships and lives to go down unhelped; feeling,

if God let the Susan and her precious freight perish, that God must be her foe.

Still, as the day grew and waned, these women watched and waited, and questioned all the sailors and fishers at the harbor about the Susan, and what they thought of the storm.

Some small vessels made port that night, and Bessie ran down to meet the crews, standing forlornly in the fog that clung and dripped like rain.

“Have any of you seen the Susan?”

“Aye, aye; ain't she in? She passed us like a bird yesterday mornin',” said one captain.

“But she is n't in. Oh, what do you think of her?”

“Aye? not in! That's bad, girl. The Susan's a main fast sailer; and the brother is in her? And maybe some other body you've your mind set on? Well, keep your heart up, girl; she may get in yet.”

She may! ah, that was but a small and bitter crumb of consolation; she dared not carry it to poor Mollie, who was already nearly distracted.

So another night, another morning — not gray, but sun-bright. Bessie rose up with a lighter heart.

“Other ships have got in safe, so may the Susan,” she said to Mollie. “We'll look for

them this day." And she set her house in order.

But, alas, before the sun was high, news of wreck crept along the coast. Some fishing vessel had been cast away, and the sad tokens of the disaster had been driven in shore during the night. All the men and women living near were hurrying by to see if they could ascertain what ship it was; for the schooners Portland and Maggie were also missing with the Susan.

So on they went to that very cove where by the magic of shell and sand Bessie had striven to spell out Tom Turner's fate. Here they lay, spoils of the sea: a bit of spar and a ragged fragment of cable; a keg; an empty barrel; a pillow; a ship's knee, and a great iron spike, an inch and a half in diameter, bent like a scrap of wire; and a bar of iron that Bessie, the strong, could scarcely lift, flung up here by the mighty water like a weed.

Nothing yet to determine whether the lost boat was Portland, Susan, or Maggie, and whose heart must break. But rising and falling on the long swells came in a larger fragment, for which all waited breathless—nearer, nearer, the men drag it in—a portion of the deckhouse. What is this over the door?—"Certified to accommodate five seamen."

Then it is the Susan; the Portland's cuddy

was marked eight, the Maggie's only four. To make assurance doubly sure, here is T. B. cut in the wood. Bessie knows when and by whom. That sunny June morning when they fixed the marriage for October Tom set here his initials and hers, and made under them this rude heart and arrow.

“Oh, Tom, Tom! are you dead—and people say that a good God rules over all! A kind God? a father? No; only a tyrant who crushes people's loves, and blackens their lives, and mocks their woe.” It is thus that distracted Bessie's smitten and rebellious heart pours out its grief and rage.

As for Mollie, she has mercifully passed into oblivion, lying on the sand with her head in an old fish-wife's lap. They cannot leave the beach: the sea may, half-repentant, give up the dead bodies of its prey. All day they watched and moaned; and with the evening tide, lo! a body floated shoreward. Bessie rushes knee-deep into the water with outstretched arms; Mollie lifts her heavy head, and gazes at the in-coming corpse in a mute despair. Well, it is in at last. Not Captain Joe of the stalwart arm; not high-hearted Tom Turner; not the old mother, coming to care for her daughter and receive in her hands her first grandchild. None of these; with slender limbs cold, and light hair dripping, and

coarse garments half torn away by the waves, it is orphan Ned, the "boy" of the Susan, a sort of pet with Tom and Joe. This dead lad, laid on the yellow sand, his face upturned to the sky, has a heavenly peace on every feature. Not a trace of battle; not a contortion of despair; no moan could have passed those lips. Heaven in storm and darkness had stooped nearer and nearer, and there had come a small loss that God had made eternal gain. Oh, to know the last words and visions of this child, who had died a hero, smiling on death!

That is all. They watch and haunt the beach for days, but no more fragments of the Susan, no more bodies of the dead.

The Portland gets in mastless, broken, her cargo gone, barely afloat; but is not that enough? Her eight seamen live.

The Maggie went to pieces on a reef, but her four men got safe to land.

"We are the only ones to lose. We are the ones God forgot to take care of; if he held those raging waters in his hand, why did he not by a merciful breath save the Susan?" Thus raves Bessie to the pitying minister and his wife.

Mollie did not rave. They almost wish she did. Alas, poor Mollie's mind has gone astray. All day she sits in a melancholy muse, or wan-

ders up and down the beach moaning her wordless pain to wind and wave.

The fishing people are kind. Neighbors bring Bessie work and wages. The parson's wife comes to them like a sister; but, charms she never so wisely, these two women are deaf adlers that will not hear a gospel of peace. When she can no longer hope to minister to their souls the parson's wife ministers to their daily needs; they can love her, and in a measure understand her, but they will have nothing to do with God.

So six weeks pass by since the wreck of the Susan, and Bessie is waiting, feeling sure of Mollie's approaching death. But the anticipated danger is no danger. There is no mother to comfort; no father to rejoice in a new born son, but Mollie's living child lies in Bessie's arms, and Mollie's mental darkness clears away, and, while realizing all her loss, Mollie is sane once more.

Loving her child, Mollie was not made happy by it; her sorrows had made her face old and wan, and her hair gray; she looked twenty years older; hapless young widow!

Of course Bessie expected to return to Cape Ann, to old friends, when Mollie was well, but to this Mollie would not consent. She fixed her mind strangely on staying on that chilly coast, and on keeping the light-house.

“ We lost our people because Nick Hays neglected the light ; you and I will tend it, Bessie, and it will never go out.”

So, in spite of all Bessie could say, Mollie would stay and keep the light-house on the coast where her husband perished. It was easy enough to get the position. Nick, of course, must lose his place, execrated for his neglect. Public sympathy was with the bereaved sisters ; their conduct on the night of the storm was known ; the minister helped on the plan, when he saw their hearts were set on it. Bessie knew their own hands must support them ; there would be great expense in going back to Cape Ann, and they had no relatives there ; perhaps to stay and keep this light-house, and wash and sew for people near, was the best they could do. It was thus that they remained on the shore. Nick Hays fled from popular indignation ; the few household goods of the sisters were moved into the lower story of the light-house, and here the cold long northern winter closed about them, shutting them out from the world ; shutting them in to their loss and pain.

By times the minister came to see them, struggling through storm, snow, and fierce winds. He brought them books, he talked to them, he prayed with them ; they merely endured his ministrations. Bessie flatly refused to entertain his

views. "God," she said, "was not her friend." He had set himself against her, and abused her, when she had never done anything particularly wrong; she deserved better treatment than she had received; she would not humble herself under the mighty hand of God!

Mollie, however, admitted that there might be comfort in religion: love to God might be a balm to her broken heart; but such feelings would seem to set her farther than ever from her husband. "Joe never said anything about these things; if he was up in heaven I would not be afraid, I would try and get there too; but I could not go there without him, and Joe is at the bottom of the sea. I can't try to be a Christian if my Joe was not one." This was all the minister could make of Mollie.

Mollie had a fashion of going up on the tower and staying there for hours. Finding Bessie alone in one of his visits, toward the end of winter, the minister warned her that the widow was in a morbid state, and might throw herself from the tower.

"She wont so long as the baby lives," said Bessie.

"Does she seem to take comfort in the child?"

"Comfort, sir? What comfort can there be? Can't you see for yourself that he ain't like other

babes? He's simple, sir; poor dear, his mother's trouble hurt his brain."

The minister's surprise and profound sympathy so touched Bessie that she said: "Well, perhaps it will do you good to know that Mollie looks much into the Bible, and that all her cry is now because she and Joe did not study it together, and join church together."

So with this morsel of encouragement the minister went home.

The long dreary winter passed; the ice loosened from the shore, and floated away; slowly the deep snows melted from the earth; ships again were seen in the offing; life began to wake up in the harbor; the boats were being made ready for summer fishing; the shoals of herring came up along the coast; the grass grew greener every day; the ploughing and sowing had begun, and when it was May commerce once more went on across Northumberland Straits.

On one of those early May days Mollie was upon the light-house tower, looking, as usual, wistfully over the blue waste where her hopes had perished, and Bessie in the living-room was rocking the cradle while she made a dress for a neighbor, when with the opening of the door came a hearty voice crying, "Bess! Bess!"—the voice of one that had perished in the sea; the

voice of one for whose destruction she had upbraided Heaven!

It was not the part of this hearty fisher-girl to faint with joy or surprise; but for certain the sewing, the cradle, and even Mollie, whom no such glad amazement awaited, were forgotten, and Bess flew at Tom Turner, and hugged and kissed him as a lover risen from the dead deserved. Then delight suddenly gave place to grief—her brother, with whom she had shared hard and pleasant experiences; she leaned back on Tom's encircling arms.

"And my Joe's gone, lad? My good, true Joe—and her mother, too?"

"Aye, Bess, they're gone. 'T was a dark night for us all. But the Lord saved me—praise his name!—and I reckon he took Joe where they're better off than we."

Was this jolly, careless Tom that was speaking so heartily of a protecting God and the final rest?

"What's come to you, Tom?" asked Bessie, awe-struck.

"I hope it's the grace of God, my girl, and, if so, all we've suffered is well paid for."

"But you're not talking like yourself, Tom."

"Like a better man, because having a better Master," said Tom, with a hearty smile.

Bessie slipped away from him, awe-struck. "Let me go tell poor Mollie," she said.

She ran up and clasped her sister to her bosom. "Oh, my poor child that has lost Joe and will never see him more!" she said, weeping. "Ah, Mollie, it was my own dear brother that you loved, and that went under the sea; and yet you'll be glad for me that God did not take all I had, Mollie, for Tom Turner's come back alive and is safe below stairs."

"And my Joe was drowned!" said Mollie, moaning. "And our Joe was drowned—and all the rest!"

By and by she came down stairs with Bessie. Tom had the babe in his arms, and he kissed its mother, saying, "I have heavy news for you, my girl; but says Joe to me, 'If you live through it you'll look out for my wife;' and here I am, a brother to you ever."

"And my Joe's deep in the sea!" said Mollie, hopelessly.

"Please God, he's safe in heaven," said Tom.

"Tom, Tom, tell me all about it," said Mollie, grasping his arm, eager for every word. Tom began:

"You see, there was no light; the wind drove to the shore and no light-house to be seen, and we went astray before we knew it. We didn't know we were in sight of land, missing the

lamp, you know, when we struck fair on a reef and the Susan cracked like a nut. Joe and I were trying to fasten your mother to a mast when a wave swept us all down, the five men and your mother, and she and one man went over, and we saw them no more."

There was a sobbing pause for all of the little group in the light-house, hearing this story of death. Tom went on:

"Joe and the boy Ned, and the other seaman and I, held on, and we knew we could n't hope for anything. 'All is lost!' says Joe; 'Ned, we're lost.' 'No,' says Ned, 'God has stood by me in life and he'll save me in death. It is a short step to heaven, captain.' 'It's well for you,' says Joe, 'but I'm lost, Ned.' 'No,' says Ned, 'the Lord Jesus is as near as ever he was on shore, and he says he's able and ready to save. Catch hold of him, captain.' 'I can't,' says Joe; 'there ain't time.' 'It did n't take long for Peter to get hold of him when he thought he was going under,' says Ned, for we were all hanging to the mast and each other, and talking loud, so we could hear. Says Ned, 'Captain, the Lord Jesus is walking here in this storm; you cry out to him hearty, and mean it with all your heart, and he'll hold you that fast you can't be lost.' 'Why, boy, he wont hear a sinner,' screams Joe. 'Them's the very kind

he does hear, having died for 'em,' says Ned ; 'don't you be afeard to trust him, captain ; I ain't.'

"So Joe began to pray, crying out earnest, and the Susan went to pieces faster and faster. I says, 'Joe, we wont see morning.' 'No,' says Joe. Ned calls out, 'Cap'n, are you afraid now?'" and Joe sung out, 'No!' 'Are you going to hold fast to the Lord, Cap'n, and he to you?' sings out Ned. 'Yes,' says Joe ; and a big wave lifted us up high, and flung us and the Susan all abroad like straws, and I found myself in the waves holding on to a piece of the mast. I had just sense enough left to hold on, and early in the morning I was picked up by a vessel. It turned out she was the ship they send from the Provinces every year to the New Hebrides with stores for the misionaries, and there were two missionaries aboard of her. Of course I had to make the trip, and then I sailed for New York, and so got round to Cape Ann, and found you two were living over here keeping light-house. So over I came on the first ship of the season."

"Well?" questioned Bessie. There was something Tom had left untold. Tom understood her.

"You see, I had been the nearest death ever I was, Bessie. And Joe was gone, too, and I had my mind on all Ned and him were saying while

we held on together; and when I got aboard the ship, the missionaries and the rest—for all the crew of them were the right stripe—well, they all laid the matter out to me as how the Lord had spared my life and had a claim on the use of it; and I declare, Bessie, it looked reasonable. That's the long and short of it, Bess. I'd served Tom Turner and the devil for twenty-eight years, and it was a bad job; and now the rest of my time, long or short, goes to the Lord; and it's a fact, Bessie, I don't know how to be thankful enough to him for giving me another chance."

"And you think my Joe's safe?" said Mollie breathlessly.

"Yes, I do," said Tom solemnly. "It did n't take the Lord long to save the thief on the cross, and we have his word on it that he wont cast out any that come to him. Not that I'd be willing to risk another chance if I did n't take the one I got."

Now, when the news of Tom's return spread, the minister, among others, came, and he said to Bessie, "What do you think of your sinfulness now? Have you not been upbraiding the Lord for this man's death? Have you not called him hard when he was kind, and doubted a care and a government that was all the while being exercised for your good? Tell me, has your

conduct been such that you think the Lord can have nothing against you now?"

Thus was Bessie convinced of sin, and when she married Tom Turner she was ready in this world to walk with him toward the better world.

Over the widowed Mollie's life fell a mantle of peace. Strength came slowly back to a mind that rested on the love and truth of God. She kept the light-house, and Bessie lived near by. Among Bessie's strong, joyous children Mollie's boy passed like a pale, unburied infant shade, making his plaintive moan as once his mother moaned to wind and wave.

"It will be all right by and by," said Mollie patiently to her friend, the pastor's wife. "Joe and I looked for a home and comfort along with the little one in this world, but you see God has only put off our happiness a little while, and we'll get it some day all together again."

In this simple faith Mollie was satisfied.

"The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me about; the weeds were wrapped about my head. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came unto thee, even into thy holy temple."

In the deep silence that followed this reading Madame Baron could hear the short breath-

ing of the little lad who always sat close by her side: she felt the plump soft hand tremble in her clasp. Robert was a tenderly sympathetic child, of strong imagination; at the moment he lived in the thing he heard. His heart was nearly broken to think of the stormy night, the drowning sailors, the little cabin-boy strong in his faith, the waiting women, the little fatherless child. Madame Baron drew him to her lap and holding him closely in her arms kissed his round dimpled cheek.

“Such things happen in this world, my darling,” she whispered; “but this life is short, and the life beyond is very long; endlessly long; our God, who orders all, can bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow.”

Grandma felt the tears stealing over her little boy's cheeks. “Come, small folks,” she said, “you have had reading enough for a while. Little hearts cannot bear what older people can. Come, the kitchen is neat and empty, and we will go there and make nut candy and chocolate drops and cocoanut balls. Cicely, you and Eunice may come, but no other grown-ups. As for me, I count with the children whenever I like. Run to the garret, little boys, for nuts, and you may crack them in the kitchen. Eunice will make ready the candy, and Cicely and I will grate cocoanut and chocolate. Every one

of you shall have a buttered plate and mould his own candy."

In the rush to the garret and back, the scramble after hammers, the choosing of plates, washing of hands, great glee took the place of gloom, and the big kitchen echoed with shouts of fun and queer little jokes. Grandma Baron thought the small people had been almost too sorrowful that afternoon. She told them that they might order the supper themselves, and that after tea they should have a game of stage coach, "and then one story."

"Not a sad story," stipulated Robert.

"No," said his grandmother; "a gay story. Eunice, I wish you would read them that story of two little twin deaf mutes that you have just written."

"Yes, certainly, Madame Baron."

"Did it turn out well?" demanded Robert.

"First rate," said Eunice emphatically.

So after the candy was made and divided, supper was over, and a jolly game of stage coach was played, Miss Eunice read the history of

TIP AND TRIC.

When Jonas and Ellen Martin married they bought two hundred acres of new land, twenty-five miles from the railroad. A log house and some barns and stables were built, land cleared,

fences made, stock and crops were raised, and, as the Bible tells us the hand of the diligent maketh rich, these honest young people prospered. Jonas could read, and could write a little; Ellen could read, but could not write her name.

When first they bought their farm there was no church service in that region, but the country soon filled up and there was preaching once a month at a school-house.

Jonas and Ellen were very happy when a pair of twin children, a boy and a girl, came to them. They called the boy Tip and the girl Tric. And then came slowly darkening upon them a great sorrow: neither Tip nor Tric could hear and speak. When Jonas and Ellen realized this it seemed as if their hearts would break. They did not know that there are schools for deaf mutes and that they can be taught; it seemed to them that these children were forever shut out from happiness and usefulness, and condemned to the life of little brutes.

These parents were themselves so little educated that they could think of no way to enter into communication with their deaf children. They loved them, fondled them, fed and clothed them, and let them run and play like the colts and the calves. A few signs, of beckoning or warning or reproof, they managed to make, and that was all. No other children came, and Jonas

and Ellen looked at Tip and Tric and felt very miserable.

Everything prospered but this affair of the children; the house was enlarged, and when the twins were seven years old crops were so good that Jonas and Ellen set a day to go in the big wagon to the town at the railroad and buy a stove, a table, a rocking-chair and perhaps even a bureau! Tip and Tric were to go: they had never been away from the farm before. Ellen had been out once to the town, and Jonas went only once each year. This was a great outing.

While they were buying the stove the hardware dealer asked, "Are those children mutes? You must send them to the great State school for mutes, fifty miles from here."

"A school? I didn't know dummies could learn anything!" cried Jonas.

"Of course they can. They teach them to read and write and draw, and to do all kinds of work—tailoring, printing, shoemaking. They learn as well as any one."

At the furniture store the dealer was much interested in the twins. "Mutes? Oh, you must send them to the Institution."

"We never heard of it till to-day," said Ellen, "Would they be good to the poor little things? Could they really learn?"

"Good! Learn! I should say so!" The

dealer held up his arm, making queer signs, and a young man in a blue suit came up.

"Here is my brother-in-law; he is a mute. He has just graduated at the Institution. Do you see those clothes and shoes? The pupils made those. Do you see those two suits of furniture? They were made at the Institution. Tom, here, learned cabinet work, and he is now working with me. He is a good hand. You shall go back in the shop and see some of his work."

Then he made more queer signs and Tom took out a tablet and wrote rapidly upon it: "Be sure and send your children to the school. They will learn all that other people do."

"Why," said Jonas, "I never could write as handsome as that!"

Then the dealer looked Tom in the face and said, "These people want to know if the teachers will be good to their children."

Jonas and Ellen were amazed to hear Tom speak out clearly: "Yes, they will be very good indeed."

"Do they teach them to speak? Can he say 'mother'?" cried poor Ellen.

"I can say 'mother,'" said Tom.

"I'll send Tip and Tric if I have to sell the farm to do it!" cried Jonas.

"It will cost very little," said the dealer;

and he addressed an envelope to the superintendent of the school, stamped it, and put in it a sheet of paper. "Now you must write to that man all about your children, and he will tell you what to do."

This was the way it came to pass that the next summer, when the twins were eight years old, they were taken to the station and handed over to a teacher who was gathering up the mutes to take them to school. They found themselves at evening at a large, handsome building, standing in beautiful grounds. There were seats under the trees, and swings, and places for playing games, and there were hundreds of children nicely dressed in uniforms of blue and gray. Tip and Tric had never seen folks in such nice clothes except on that one day when they went to town.

They were washed, and dressed like the rest, and taken to supper. There were long tables covered with white cloths, and each child had a white napkin and a big glass tumbler. Tip and Tric had never seen such splendor before. At each table some one arose, looked upwards, and made some signs, while each watched the signs and at the end bowed its head.

At bed-time a matron took Tric to a long ward, full of little beds, where twenty little girls were put each into a white gown. Then all the

twenty knelt down and the matron, with lifted eyes, made some signs. The children who had been there before repeated these signs. After this each child was tucked into bed.

Two hours after, Tric woke up and saw the matron, in a long gown, with a lamp in her hand, come from her room at the end of the ward and take a look at the child in each little bed. Tip had similar experiences.

Between the children and the teachers Tip and Tric learned very fast. All mutes show great aptitude for writing. Soon Tip and Tric could write many words. They were a bright little pair, and before long could make their playmates understand them in the sign-language, and could understand their mates. They learned that there is a God, and that the signs before meals were to thank him for their food, and the bed-time signs were a prayer for his care over them during the night. By degrees they learned much more about God, and about right and wrong. So went by a happy year, and Tip and Tric went home for vacation.

When they reached home all was so very different from the school! Tip and Tric wanted to bring in school ways. Tric was bound to set the table with a cloth, and as she could not find a cloth she took a sheet. She put on the table her mother's four cherished tumblers, which

had ornamented the best-room shelf, and in place of napkins she found her mother's few treasured handkerchiefs. Then about the blessing. What, no blessing! Well, Tip managed that. At bed-time the twins made their parents kneel down, and they made their sign-prayer.

"Jonas," said Ellen with tears, "I do believe they're going through the Lord's Prayer my mother taught me long ago. Oh, Jonas, what heathens we be! The blessed children are teaching us, and we never taught them more than if they were little dogs or calves."

Soon Tip and Tric became very homesick for their playmates and their lessons. At home no one could communicate with them, or teach them, and their hungry little minds longed for school. No one could tell them how far it was to the railroad, or that steam cars did not run abroad over the country roads, or how long it would be before they would go back to school. After a week of longing, they ran each day to climb two tall gate-posts and there they sat, perched like little images, looking with eager eyes for the cars to come and take them to their dear school! When the cars did not appear the children cried, and poor Ellen sat down and cried too. She bought table-cloths and napkins, and pink dishes and new spoons and white curtains, and still the children pined for school.

One Saturday the preacher came to stay over Sunday and preach at the school-house. Happily he understood the sign-language, as he had once taught in a school for mutes. He explained to the twins all about vacation, and when they could be taken back to school.

Then next day at the preaching they found slates and pencils at the school-house and the school-teacher loaned them each one. Then they were happy. They wrote "father" and "mother" on the slates, and "God loves me," and "I love God." At this wonderful exhibition Jonas and Ellen were so overjoyed that they cried, and said, "These dear little ones will soon be like other folks. They will know as much as the preacher!"

When school began Ellen accompanied the children and remained a week, trying to learn something of the sign-language, and the teacher gave her a little book about it.

That winter Ellen boarded the school-teacher and she and Jonas studied every night to keep up with their mute children! Each year Ellen visited her twins at school, and the home far up in the country received the benefit of all she saw and heard.

At the end of ten years Jonas and Ellen saw their mute children graduate. Tip was now as fine and sensible a lad as the Tom who had so

much surprised his parents, and Tric was a very pretty-mannered young woman and was an excellent dress-maker, who could get from her neighbors all the work she could do. It was a very comfortable, happy, Christian home they came to. Jonas did not need now to be told to ask a blessing or have family prayers; the parents and home had been made over by means of a pair of deaf mutes and what Christian philanthropy had done for them.

“Well, I call that a nice story,” said Robert. “Grandma, I wish you would take me to see a school for deaf and dumb. I wonder if I could understand their signs! Ben! Alec! let us try to tell each other something all by signs.” There was a vigorous signing and some wild guessing. Then Mr. Vance said he could teach them the alphabet for mutes on the fingers. This and a few signs being practised, when the youngsters were sent to bed there was much darting into halls, arms thrust into rooms through small cracks in the charily-opened doors, and frantic signs were made, by waving hands, accompanied by shouts of “Guess what this means!”

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN SUN CAME AFTER STORM.

“These evils I deserve;
And yet I trust his pardon to receive
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant.”

“LETTERS at last!” cried Mrs. Lyman on Thursday, when Mr. Danforth came back from his morning ride to Tipton. “And, dear Madame Baron, here at the very top of the pile of documents is a letter from that blessed Charlotte G—— in whose story you took so much interest.”

“I am glad indeed,” said Madame. “I felt uncommonly drawn to that girl by your description of her. I have really lain awake at night thinking what I could do for her. Such a drawing always seems to me an indication that I have an errand to do for God. What it is in this instance I cannot clearly see.”

“Perhaps this letter will make matters clearer to you,” said Mrs. Lyman as she cut open the envelope.

“Poor Charlotte!” she said; “sorrow still follows her: her mother is dead and the home

is broken up. The sister who was engaged to the correspondence clerk married, it seems, a month before Mrs. G—— died; her clerk was offered a good position, and they married and went to Australia: the family gathered what they could for the bride's outfitting and for a ticket for the dressmaker, who could do so much better in Australia. 'It was such a good opening for her,' poor Charlotte writes. The sister who managed the baker's shop is also married. Fair times came back again to her clerk: 'Such a big salary,' poor Charlotte writes. 'Ten pounds a month; only think of it! And they have asked father to live with them.' Ten pounds—only fifty dollars—and they consider themselves particularly well off! The 'sister who was in the cake shop has such a good place to wait upon an invalid lady in the country.' Charlotte says 'she will be able to lay up money by and by, as she gets three pounds ten and her keep.' Just now she cannot lay up anything, for she assumed all the funeral expenses of the dear mother and has that to work out first. 'It was so good of her,' Charlotte says. Charlotte does not know what she will do. She fears she must go out to service if she can find a place. The positions her sisters left are not open to her; Charlotte was so frightened when she went to ask for the place at the baker's that she stut-

tered, and the baker would have nothing to do with her. Charlotte is ashamed of herself for being so silly, but she cannot help it; she has tried so hard! She hopes I will not think she is too proud to do any kind of work; but it will be so lonesome to be a maid of all work, and she is somewhat worn out with nursing her mother and fears she will break down with so many coals to carry. She will be very glad to get a place, but is first to stay six weeks with her sister, mending all the father's clothes and helping the sister to get settled. Then she must set out for herself, and means to be brave about it and hopes she wont stutter."

"Now," said Madame Baron, "I can see just what to do for Charlotte. I have been wishing for some nice, reliable, companionable young girl to stay here with me when Eunice is away on visits, and to be with Eunice when I am gone. My home is plenty large enough for one more, and I really need that one more. If you will at once write to Charlotte all about it and offer her the place I will inclose thirty pounds for her outfit and ticket, and she may come as soon as she likes."

"That has a beautiful sound," said Mrs. Lyman, "and makes me heart-glad for Charlotte. But suppose you do not like Charlotte as well as I do; suppose you are disappointed in her!"

“I feel sure that I shall not be; but suppose I am: it will be a mistake easy to remedy. We can probably find Charlotte exactly what would suit her, and thirty pounds will be no great loss. I fancy the girl herself would be satisfied to come.”

“She would be more than delighted. In fact I feel as if this is all truly providential; one of the Father’s ways of providing for a child. If you really wish to try this, Madame Baron, I will write to-day and mail the letter to-morrow.”

“Do so, by all means. This Charlotte and that good Sardinia Bowker have been on my mind since I heard their stories. If I only could do something for Sardinia I should feel well satisfied; but her case seems harder to reach than Charlotte G——’s.”

Keziah had come into the room to arrange a closet, and now, turning her head from the shelf she was putting in order, she said, with a laugh, “May be Sardinia will come into good fortune by herself, Madame Baron.”

“How? What do you mean, Keziah?”

“Keziah knows something amusing,” said Mrs. Lyman.

“Well, it is rather funny,” said Keziah. “You know that Mr. Slocum who was here the evening when the story about Sardinia was read. You know I said he had bought that

farm out by Doe Creek and was going to build on it. He was mightily struck with that story about Sardinia. He said she was the right kind of a girl, and he talked about her all the rest of the evening as we sat by the kitchen fire. Tuesday night, you remember, it began to rain heavy. Well, he was on his way with his second load of lumber, not so far from Bowker's lane, when the rain began. He could have got home if he had tried, but he turned in and asked Mr. Bowker to take him in for the night. Bowker's folks always have plenty, and are as friendly as friendly, so they made him welcome. Next day, yesterday, you know, it rained hard, and he just stayed right on, visiting. Ezra was up at four this morning and rode over to Bowker's for some seeds he was wanting, and Mr. Slocum and his lumber was just getting out of the lane gate when Ezra turned in there, and he 'lowed to Ezra that Sardinia was the right kind of a girl; mighty nice in the house and more 'n good to the children and her mother; and he said if Sardinia did n't have a nice new house and all the pigs and all the cows and all the chickens, and everything ship-shape the way she 'd like it, it would be because she would n't take 'em when offered to her, as they would be when his building was done. And he said nobody would darst to sell Sardinia's things for

anybody's debts after that. Mr. Slocum is a very stirrin' man, and very forehanded, and as kind as they make 'em. He's a good man, too, a church member, and liberal. I would not be surprised, ma'am, if by this time next year Sardinia would have affairs just about as she likes 'em, and poor Mis' Bowker will feel real settled in her mind about her."

"Why, Keziah, you have come into the list of our story-tellers; but there are only two of us to hear you," said Mrs. Lyman laughing.

"I would n't have told it if there'd been more," said Keziah; "and I do n't want you to tell it either, for it does sound real comical—on such short notice!"

"We'll be sure and not say a word of it," said Mrs. Lyman. "It would not be fair to Sardinia, who evidently knows nothing of these fine plans for her future."

That evening, when the family came together, Mr. Tracy said he wished to relate to them the story of

A MODERN ST. CHRISTOPHER.

To lose fortune when all the world seems to be going prosperously—this is hard. To lose home when home is dear—this is hard. To lose friends when the heart is warm and friendly—this is hard. To lose reputation—"I have

lost the immortal part, sir, of myself, and what remains is bestial"—this is passing hard. But to lose faith, to find the soul suddenly stripped of its trust, its hopes, to find the present orphaned of God's fatherhood, the future desolated of the eternal life—this is the loss hardest of all.

“ We sit unowned upon our burial sod,
And know not whence we come, nor whose we be ;
Comfortless mourners for the Mount of God,
The rocks of Calvary.”

There was a man, Harvey Ogden by name, who had experienced all these losses, even to that culminating loss of all. That last came suddenly upon him one lowering November day when a dull mist driven by raw winds was rolling in from the sea over the sodden land ; the sun seemed to have forgotten the world, and Heaven to have forgotten him.

He stood in a dreary landscape where wet poplars lined the muddy roads, where the harvests had all been gathered, and the small houses, scattered here and there, proclaimed the poverty of the soil.

Could this landscape ever have been sun-kissed and beautiful? He straightened himself from tightening his saddle-girth and looked abroad. Had he ever found this lovely the year round? Yes ; but then he was young, and

heart and life had been full of benediction. Now, here, where he was born, his heart had died within him; his heart, his soul, had perished. Heart? Soul? Had he, in any high sense, ever possessed either? Had not his heart been simply a contracting and expanding muscle? His soul, was it not mere animal breath; his own status, was it not merely a little higher, but less stolidly enduring, than that of this dripping ox, waiting patiently, chewing its cud, in a corner of a rail fence?

All his losses had come upon him as the work of one man who, out of jealous envy, had falsely accused him of evil; had driven him from a good position, from home, from happiness. How he had hated his adversary! How he had impotently longed to wreak vengeance upon him! But at last, in the land of the stranger, years had brought him friends, honor, wealth; and, finally he had heard the wooing voice of the Nazarene, "Arise, and follow me," and he had answered, "My Lord and my God!"

He had made it the test of his new life, of his faith and hope, that he could forgive his enemy. He found that his heart had grown calm and forbearing at thought of him: he no longer craved to tear him in pieces, to wreak upon him tenfold the measure which he had received.

When he realized this change in himself he

believed the new life well begun, and he rejoiced in the Lord greatly. The old Adam was dead! Christ reigned! He walked in fellowship with the Supreme. How happy he was for a while! Then he began to have doubts of himself. Was the change really so great as he had believed? Was he not self-deceived? He would put himself to a crucial test. He would go back to the place where he had suffered. He would face the enemy who had triumphed. He would feel the blessed calm of self-conquest, and know that he was forgiven of God by this sign—that he himself had forgiven his enemy. In the golden Indian summer he began the pilgrimage which was to prove to him his acceptance with God.

As he moved toward the scenes of his early days a cold change came upon him. The path, once traced in pain and burning rage, brought back, as retraced, burning rage and pain. The summer died from out the landscape, the winter of the world and the winter of doubt had come; his life had the nakedness of Arctic snowfields.

Finally he left the railroad, and on horseback traveled slowly toward the old home. Then the tempest of passion broke upon him, surged over him, wrecked his soul, and cast him, beaten, baffled, and bereft, upon the cold shores of doubt—and from doubt he reached despair.

Hate and revenge were rampant still! Then, evidently, he had deceived himself and was himself unforgiven. All that peace, that holy rapture, then? Myth, sentiment, lost imaginations, lingering superstitions of childhood. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Had He repaid? No. Then the promise and the Promiser were alike figments of some fair fancy. Perfect love, forgiveness of enemies, doing good to persecutors, praying for those who hate: no, no, it was all impossible, all a dream; there was no such new life of the Crucified within him.

He drove his spurs into his lagging horse; he now desired but one thing: to reach the bank, whence, to hide his own sin, Andrew Mitchell had driven him, and there to smite the lie and the life out of Andrew Mitchell, the smug cashier.

Had he a knife? Surely he had. Oh, he would use it with all his strength. What a craven he had been to let vengeance sleep so long! Now all was lost to him but that one last wild joy. God and the future life were lost, and the present life had in it no good to be counted beside revenge. On, then, on!

He almost stumbled over a woman running, crying, up the road, from a little wagon-camp standing beside a smouldering fire at a turn of the roadway.

“Stop, sir! I hope you be a doctor, for here’s a man as is dyin’!”

“No; I am not a doctor. What has happened?”

“Something burst in his breast, and he bleeds awful. Stop, sir, will you? Whether you know doctorin’ or not, sir, stop, for I’m alone except for the bit children, an’ my man a poor cripple. This stranger will die on our hands, an’ we’re that hopeless poor!”

Harvey Ogden dismounted and bent low to enter the miserable little tent. On a pile of ragged bedding lay a man, emaciated, shaggy of hair and beard, in a swoon, possibly. Near to death he looked, while the red stream was yet dripping over his lips.

“Dying of hemorrhage of the lungs.” Harvey Ogden gave the verdict with the assurance of a medical practitioner.

“Oh, sir,” pleaded the woman, “can’t he be got away from here? Yon is all the bed we have, an’ this is all the shelter for five, an’ he is nothing to us. We were just giving him an’ his child”—she pointed to a little creature asleep near the sick man—“a lift for fifty cents to the town below, an’ here we had to stop, along of the way he was took.”

Unbeliever in everything, and full of universal hate as Harvey Ogden had recently be-

come, he could not let this fellow-creature lie in so terrible a strait. He ran down the road to a small house. A tidy woman in widow's dress opened the door. Ogden hastily explained the situation.

"If you will let me have a room and a bed I will pay for it and will send for a doctor, and will stay by the poor creature until, in a day or two, we can move him. Here—there's earnest. Will you get a place ready?"

The woman hesitatingly took the five dollars. "Tisn't Christian to let a man die yonder in the rain," she said looking down the road.

Ogden hastened back, folded a quilt into a stretcher, laid the man on it, covered him, and seeing that the tramp-woman was strong bade her carry the pallet at the feet while he bore the head. The crippled man followed, bringing the child.

"Where did you pick him up? Do you know his name?"

"Not a thing about him," protested the woman; "he had no luggage but a little packet of food for the child. We took him up ten miles east of this."

For a while Ogden, the widow and her son were busy checking the flow of blood and making the patient easy in a clean bed and clean clothes. Then the son went for a doctor, and the widow

washed and curled the child, dressed him in some improvised garments, fed him, and rocked him to sleep, singing to him a hymn.

“There is no hope,” said the doctor; “he wont last six hours.”

The apparently unconscious man had heard. He opened his eyes slowly and said: “Take my boy to my aunt, Jane Thurlow.”

Then Harvey Ogden knew him, knew him by his eyes. His enemy, Andrew Mitchell! And with the light of recognition rushing into his face Andrew Mitchell knew him also.

“You!” he gasped.

“Yes, I am here. Andrew, listen! You are dying; say the truth before these two witnesses. It was not I that took the bank’s funds. Speak!”

Then, with one great effort, Andrew Mitchell raised himself on his elbow, stretched out a long bony finger, and spoke.

“Curse you, Harvey Ogden! I never had an hour of luck since I saw the last of you! Everybody dogged me about you. Clear you now? No, I wont clear you! Curse you!”

As he fell back the red blood swelled once more past his lips—and ceased—and he was dead.

“I’ll make out a burial certificate,” said the

doctor, who was new to these parts and to whom this scene told but little.

“Who was he?” asked the widow, looking askance at the corpse. “What did he say about the child?”

“He said to take him to Miss Jane Thurlow. The man’s name was Andrew Mitchell.” The name burnt Harvey Ogden’s lips like fire. He realized that he hated his relentless enemy dead more than he had hated him while he was yet alive.

“Andrew Mitchell, was he?” said the widow curiously. “Used to be a bank cashier hereabouts, long ago—ten years ago; defaulted, and ran off. Going to his aunt, Jane Thurlow, was he? He would n’t have found her. Died two years ago, and left all her money to a church home. You’ll help me out of this, wont you? You brought him here. We can bury him tomorrow in the old farm burying-ground, back of our orchard, but we’re too poor to take expense.”

Certainly it was not right to burden the widow. Caught in the toils of fate, Harvey Ogden set forth in the storm to buy his enemy’s coffin, and when it was brought through the cold rain, the cover splashed with the mud of the roads, he aided the widow’s son in making this that had been his destroyer ready for burial.

Did he forgive him then? No. A curse and a reiterated injury—these had been Andrew Mitchell's last bequest.

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Noon. The rain had ceased falling, and a yellow light struggled through the vapors. The grave had been filled in and roughly smoothed over.

Harvey Ogden asked for his horse. It was time to move on—objectless. The sleuth-hounds of revenge could not pursue a trail that ended in a grave. Revenge had lost its quarry, but hate lived on. He had buried his enemy—but he hated him still. As for God, God was farther from him than ever; so far off now that he had lost Him in cold distance, and no longer accounted that He was!

“How about the child?” asked the widow. “I can't keep him; you brought him here, you should take him away.”

“Where? Poor little creature!” faltered Ogden.

“To the county house, I reckon. Poor creature surely! He is a sweet child, but I can't do for him. We are deep in debt. You'll pass the poorhouse on your road to town; five miles from here it is. You'll see it.”

See it? Of course he would. He had known it from his childhood, and as a child, riding by,

had looked with childish pity and curiosity at the miserable inmates—unloved infancy, un-honored age.

The widow lifted up the child to the arms of Harvey Ogden, seated on his horse. There was nothing to do but receive him into his bosom and ride away slowly because of the mud.

The child nestled against Ogden, clutched his beard fast for security, and then slept, and grew rosy, and dimpled, and cherubic in sleep. Then a voice spoke in Harvey Ogden's ear: "Whoso receiveth one such little child in my name receiveth me."

Now you can not doubt the identity of one who in a known voice speaks to you clearly. Harvey Ogden knew this voice. It was his Lord's. Then the man thought of another Child—an infant, sweet and guileless, in whose eyes mingled human childhood and eternal mysteries: a child sitting upon a woman's lap in a town called Bethlehem; a child who had consecrated childhood. And now how heavy grew this sleeping child in Harvey Ogden's arms! He weighed like lead; he bore him down. Oh, mighty load! for He who bore the world on his heart had put himself in this little one's place, and the man bent and was crushed under the immense burden.

This child put in a poorhouse, to live unwel-

comed and unloved and untended all its baby days? Not so; that would be the Christ outcast in him. This child to live, one by one, those thirty-three years lived once by the Son of man, and in them to be delivered over to loneliness, ignorance, sin? Then, in him thus the Christ betrayed. In sleep the child held Harvey fast, and still smiled on. But Harvey now saw only a thorn-crowned head, a "Man with eyes majestic after death." . . . There was a monotone deep down in his heart, repeating: "for me— for me." . . . His heart was broken, and, breaking, strangely its life was renewed. His arms clasping the babe were paralyzed; a Nineteenth Century St. Christopher, he was carrying the Christ.

"If thine enemy hunger—feed him; if he thirst give him drink"—said the voice of the Nazarene. This he had done.

"Sick, and ye visited me, naked, and ye clothed me; a stranger, and ye took me in. Ye did it unto me. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom."

What! There was no question now! Was this sun and summer shine breaking over the world? Harvey Ogden had again found his God, never more to lose Him; for now He had entered into some subtle, masterful, absorbing relationship to his soul. Doubts? They had vanished like the last folds of the mist, for God

was over him, directing all; and in him, accepting all; and in his arms, in the person of his enemy's child, he carried—Christ.

He clearly saw it now: his trusting to self, resting on his own forgiving for forgiveness; his trying to be unto himself his own saviour. All his fabric of self-confidence had crumbled into dust and left him shelterless and prone. Then One divine had lifted him up, and had shown him how the new life had been still working in him, and now offered to receive as to Himself all that was done for the little child.

The juniors of the company had listened very quietly to this story, but it contained thoughts deeper than could fit their small experiences. It was too much of a "grown people's story" for them. Their eyes, however, brightened when Mrs. Ainslie said, after some discussion of Mr. Tracy's story, and further remarks about human capacity for self-deception, "That was a man's story, about a man's heart and a man's troubles. I have thought of a boy's story, of a boy's troubles, and a boy's helpfulness. It is another of my Scotch stories, such as Robert likes."

"Which we all like," cried Eunice.

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Lyman, "we should be glad if you told us one every day."

“Alec,” said Robert, leaning forward, “here’s something you will enjoy first rate.”

“Aye,” said Alec, “but I like them all. I ne’er heard ony sic stories before, and I didna ken there were ony in the warl’ but Bible stories. I’ve aye been main fond o’ them.”

“If you stay with Mrs. Ainslie you’ll hear stories, boy! She’s just full of them,” said Robert, settling himself back in his chair and fixing his eager expectant eyes on his old friend’s face. “What is the name of your story, Aunt Ainslie?”

“My story happened fifteen years or more ago, out in Kansas, and I will call it

“HIS MITHER’S LADDIE.”

A wide, wide reach of prairie. The great, round, yellow July moon rising slowly above the horizon.

Two sod houses—one evidently unoccupied. Near the other stood a cow, and close to the black opening which represented a door lay a dog, his nose in his paws.

Up out of the black opening came a woman. She did not look at the rising moon, at the still brilliant sky, nor at the breeze-kissed expanse of grass and flowers. She saw nothing but the drawn face of the baby she held in her arms.

She laid the baby in the old shawl on the

ground and sat on a box staring at it. Her elbows were on her knees, her face on her hands. Such a worn, utterly hopeless face! Her eyes had the hunted look of one beaten from every refuge—of one who had lost, and lost, and lost.

A year before, when wagons were starting westward every day, she and her husband, with a wagon and two lean horses and the few things they owned, had started with the rest. They had wandered around, and early in the spring they had stopped at this place with another wagon of movers. They had built their sod huts, the baby had been born, and a week ago the other family had moved on. Three days before the baby had sickened; the same scorching fever that had burned out the lives of her two other babies had seized upon this one. Her husband had taken their one horse, for he had traded the other for a cow, and had ridden away fifty miles to the nearest settlement, where rumor had it there was an herb doctor; but it was the night of the second day and he had not returned. She could not endure to hold this baby while it died, as she had held the others. The blackest darkness was around her—such darkness as the mind on the verge of insanity can see and feel and hear.

There was the sound of something moving inside the dug-out and a boy emerged from the

blackness into the clear mellow moonlight—an emaciated, ague-weakened boy of about twelve; something about him looked Scotch—his sandy hair and blue eyes and ruggedness of facial outline. He was trembling with weakness, for it was almost the first time he had crawled out since the other movers had gone. He had been with them and they had left him behind in his illness. He knelt down by the baby.

“S’all the bairnie leeve?” His voice was very sweet, and the tenderness of it forced itself on the woman’s attention.

“No,” she said in a dry tone, as though she spoke with the greatest effort.

“Hae you prayed to the gude God?”

“No.”

“Why dinna you pray for the bairnie’s life?”

“I do n’t know how.”

“Folks is fearfu’ ignorant in this lan’! S’all I pray the Lord to spare the bairnie?”

“It’s no use. It’s dyin’.”

“S’all I pray, I say? The Lord has power over death itsel’.” The voice was insistent.

“Yes,” was the forced answer.

He knelt down beside the baby, the moonlight full on him, the warm breeze stirring his hair.

“Our Father in heaven,” the trembling voice prayed earnestly, “we ask you to luik at the

bit bairnie here an' no tak' it awa' to yoursel'; for the mither is grievin' sair—and she doesna ken aboot your mighty love, nor hoo you can save a'. Dinna let her greet mair. I canna thole it. For your ain Son's sake. Amen."

"I ken the prayer o' twa is better—pray yoursel'," he urged.

And strongly moved she cried out: "Oh, God, my baby—my baby!"

"That's nae so gude a prayer as mine," hesitated the boy, "but I ken the Lord will hear you sooner sin' it's your bairn."

He felt the baby's hand and head—he put his ear to its breast, he felt its feet.

"I maun say," the sweet voice went on regretfully, "I haena sae mickle faith as I should, an' faith I'm tellt is aye necessary; but we maun mak' up for my lack o' faith by doin'. I ken what to do to mak' the bairnie leeve." He spoke confidently, and the woman started and knelt down passionately by the baby. "You s'all haud it—for it's no deein' the noo, I'm sure—an' I'll pray the gude God to gie me strength till I mak' the fire and heat some water."

He lighted the fire in the primitive contrivance beside the dug-out and put on some water, then brought a tin dish and rags out of the house.

"I ken a' there is aboot fevers," he said con-

fidently. "I was sick of a fever in a hospital an' I ken hoo they treat it. They sponged me, an' aye they wrappit me in wet things, an' aye they happit me in dry things, an' they aye pit bit powders an' wee draps o' drink in my mou', an' I got well fine. I'll sit doon by the fire an' you lay the bairnie in my lap on the plaidie, an' then do you dip the raggies in the warm water and sponge awa'. Sponge its head an' face, an' a' its body, an' its back mair, while I keep happing' it wi' the plaidie. An' do you pit hot things till its feet, an' sin' you haena powders we'll pit a bit drappie hot water in its mou'—so—you sponge brawly! I ken its whole skin is parched. Why—its head feels better a'ready! I wis' ye wad luik—it's bit eyes closin'—na, na, dinna be a coof!—it's no deein'—it's shuttin' its eyes natural; didna I tell you its mou's mair easy?"

The woman bathed the little scrawny body with trembling eagerness, the boy wrapping it well in the shawl as she proceeded.

"Quick noo—milk Sukey a few draps, an' we'll pit a big drap hot water intil it." And when the decoction was gently inserted into the baby's mouth with a spoon the little thing swallowed and took four spoonfuls, and then restfully turned its little head and slept a quiet, natural sleep.

“Noo dinna you see the power o’ the gude God?” said the boy triumphantly, in a low tone, as he lay on the ground resting his throbbing head on the dog, while the mother sat on the box holding the quietly-sleeping baby. The blackness of darkness had passed away from her. Her heart beat high with thankfulness and love. Never had the like of this happened to her before; she was as sure now that her baby would live as she had been that it would die.

“We hae askit for the bairnie’s life and hae receivit—an’ noo we maun return thanks. S’all I?”

“Yes.”

The boy knelt again. “Our Father in heaven, we return thanks. The bairnie’s doin’ fine, an’ the mither doesna greet, an’ we’re mair than thankfu’. Amen.”

“Gin I was your age,” the sweet voice went on gently after a pause, “I wadna be content no to pray. Hoo can you expect onything gin ye winna ask for it?”

“Who taught you?”

“My mither. Hoo can you teach your bairn gin you dinna ken yoursel’? Dinna you desire your bairn to ken his Maker, and the Word, and the catechism?”

“I’ll learn from you.”

“Aye,” with satisfaction; “then you can teach the bairn. Hae you had ither bairns?”

“Two.”

“Deid?”

“Yes.”

“Didna they ken their prayers?”

“They died babies.”

“I ken the gude God took the bit things whaur they could be well and happy, an’ wadna leave them to be no taught their prayers an’ no to respec’ his name. Gin you teach this bairn gude ways I dootna you ’ll keep him.”

The boy spoke with absolute confidence; the woman’s face changed marvellously; she leaned forward eagerly.

“Are my babies happy?”

“Aye, aye.” The sweet voice was decisive but low. “I had a brither and a sister wha deid babies, and my mither tellt me a’ about it. Jesus loves the bairnies, an’ he carries the babies in his bosom. There’s no cold nor no heat—no sickness nor no tears—where my mither is”—with a little break in his voice.

The woman’s face wore a strange, far-away look. Her intelligence was being aroused. She had heard from time to time of God and of Christ, of heaven and of prayer, but she had heard as one without ears. No message had ever come addressed to her. All these things

were for people with leisure and money and homes. Now it seemed different.

“Is your mother dead?”

“Aye; she died amaist as soon’s we landed in this kintra. She bade me never to forget my father’s an’ my mither’s God—an’ I winna. An’ to pray every day, an’ I wull. An’ to luik oot always for a chance to tell folk aboot oor Saviour, an’ hoo he deid to save us, an’ I wull. An’ she said God himsel’ wad care for me, an’ she deid.” The boyish voice trembled again.

“An’ yer daddy?”

“He died in Scotland.”

“An’ were ye left alone?”

“Aye.”

“I do n’t call that God takin’ good care of you.”

The boy seemed momentarily staggered. “But he did,” he answered. “I had a sair fever an’ went to a braw hospital, an’ lived fine an’ learned good English.”

“How came ye here away?”

“They got me a place to work for a gardener. He wanted to gae West an’ took me. But his wife couldna thole me. She couldna thole anything her mon liked, an’ she wadna gie him ony peace till he let me gae wi’ they Bakers yon; an’ they were a shiftless lot. It made me sick to see ’em. Gin I hadna been of

an' unco thankfu' deesposition, an' unco weel instructit, I couldna hae thankit the gude God for the dirty messes they cookit. An' when I came doon wi' the fever an' shakes ye ken they left me here. I feel better the night, though I'd been thinkin' I wad surely dee."

"God might 'a' cared for you better than to drop you out here in this lone waste, nary house in sight, and chance to starve come winter."

"Na, na, hoo ken you that?" the boy rejoined wistfully. "Belike he was carin' for you. Didna I help you with the bairn? Belike you'll be a gude woman the noo, an' no be like they Bakers mair, an' teach your bairnie gude ways, an' help your man gar the lan' gie us great things come winter. Gin I get on my legs I'll gar things grow my ain sel', for I ken hoo. An' I'll help fine, an' we'll hae things better for the bit laddie, for I ken hoo. I ken a heap o' things."

The woman's horizon seemed to widen. Something of the greatness and calmness of the prairie seemed to enter into her nature. Something of the soft clear light that flooded the landscape seemed to be shining dimly in her own soul—the light of hope and trust; even the light of God's love. And she had her baby sleeping safely in her arms.

“Wull you love the Lord Christ wha died to save you, an’ wha carries your wee bairns in his arms, an’ love and serve the gude God who made us a’, an’ loves us a’, an’ grieves sair gin we gang oor ain miserable gait, no gettin’ the gran’ good that comes frae servin’ him? Wull you—the noo—for the bairnie’s sake too?” Still the sweetness of the boy’s voice, the insistent earnestness of it.

“Oh, yes,” she half sobbed, “if you’ll teach me.”

“Gin you’ll pray aften wi’ me the Lord himsel’ wull teach us baith an’ gie us the gift o’ his Holy Spirit. Sae I’ve aye been tellt, an’ my mither taught me oor Saviour’s words till I ken the maist o’ what he said himsel’.”

When the dawn came a weary horseman rode slowly alone across the prairie to the house, head down, utterly discouraged. He had a dim feeling that his wife would lose her mind if the child died—and he knew it was dead. The herb doctor had been gone two months. There was no hope for him. He had no money. He must go and dig another little grave.

But the boy crawled out to meet him, and half supporting himself by the side of the jaded horse said, with a smile on his thin face: “The gude God has spared the bairnie’s life and its mither’s a glad woman. Dinna luik sae doon-

hearted, mon! I'm better mysel' an' I'll help you fine. I ken a' about diggin'."

That was hard on to thirty years ago. The prairie is prairie no more, but rich farm lands. The woman lives yet and she is old. But her old face is far younger and more peaceful and happy than her young face ever was. The baby, man grown, with a bit of a boy of his own, is, so the neighbors tell each other, "a grand good son to his mother." The husband died before their times were at their best, but not before he had found out that manhood was worth something, and that even he could serve God out there in the broad, new country.

And the boy kept his word and "helped fine." He made it the business of his life to obey his good Scotch mother and tell of the love of Christ. And the people on the farm are proud indeed when the great minister comes from the city church and stays with them a while, just as decisive, just as urgent, just as confident, almost as sweet-voiced as when, a little lad, he "kent a' about" so many things.

CHAPTER X.

ROBERT COMES TO THE FRONT.

“A schoolboy’s tale! The wonder of the house.”

“COUSIN EUNICE,” said Robert in a complaining tone, “I’m sure the river will be down and everybody gone before you write out my bear story, the one Mr. Slocum told me. Yesterday the river stopped rising. The drift is all gone out of it, and I do really believe to-day it will fall—well, as much as an inch!”

Eunice laughed. “If it goes down as fast as that, Robert, why then you can have me read the bear story, when I have finished it, to you all alone by yourself, to keep you from pining after your lost guests.”

“No! no! Eunice! I want it read to them all. I want to see the boys stare at the bear story. And you promised me, Eunice; folks must keep promises.”

“So they must, and so will I. This very evening the bear story will be ready.”

“There! I was pretty sure you would not disappoint me; you hardly ever do.”

“Do I ever?”

“Well, no; I think not. My! I wish it was

evening. I want to see what the boys will say to that bear story."

When, with a shout of "story-time!" the children had taken their usual evening places, Madame Baron said, "Robert is going to give the first story to-night."

"Pooh!" "Pshaw!" whispered Ned and Ben under breath.

"Mr. Slocum told it to me, and Cousin Eunice wrote it out, and she is going to read it for me," explained Robert.

"Oh, that's better," whispered Ned and Ben. Eunice read:

"A NINE-YEARS-OLD HERO."

"I really must get to the store, Henry. The church and Sunday-school will begin Sunday week, and Jimsey cannot go unless he has shoes and a suit. I need a frock and a bonnet, and as baby Grace came on the edge of winter she has never had any wrap but my old shawl. She must have something so that we can carry her along to meeting. I can't more 'n get Jimsey's suit and my frock done if I go now."

"That's so, Maria; and this is just the afternoon to go. We could get back by milking-time; the roads are prime. But I tell you what: I feel skeery about setting off with two children behind them frisky young mules that are not

used to being driven. I'm not a mite afraid for you and me. I can hold 'em in, if I'm let alone. But wild teams and children do n't fit, and that's a fact.

"Then there's that burning we began this morning. If the wind springs up the fire might revive along toward the fence, and creep down on the barn, if no one was here to watch it. It would be pretty hard on us, Maria, to come back and find our house burnt up. It does appear to me we had better leave the children at home. Jimsey can look out for the burning if it comes up again; and he can take care of baby Grace."

"I never have left the children here alone, out of sight of neighbors," said Mrs. Hunt, hesitatingly.

"What good could the neighbors do?" spoke up Jimsey, between two installments of corn-bread and gravy. "Why, mam dearie, don't I take care of Grace 'most all day sometimes?"

"Yes, you do," said his mother, "and if you were not such a good help my work would n't get on so nice and easy. I'm not afraid to trust baby Grace to you, Jimsey. If there's a better boy than you I never saw him."

"And if any thing comes along to make trouble—there's my gun," said his father.

"Oh, I'd rather Jimsey let the gun alone," cried Mrs. Hunt.

“Now, mam, dear, it is only boys that do n't know guns that get hurt fooling with them. You know I'd never touch it unless I had to—so that you yourself would want me to.”

“That's so, Jimsey, you are just as trusty as any man,” said both parents.

Jimsey was a big boy for his nine years, clear-eyed and strong; he held up his head now and looked bigger than ever, for nothing makes a boy feel better than to be told that he is trusted, when he knows that he tries to be worthy of it.

“Come, Maria—do n't be afraid to leave Grace with Jimsey; let us start.”

“Do, mam dear. I'll run help father harness while you get ready, and when you are gone I'll do up the dishes as good as a girl. I'll have to be girl and boy too, until Grace grows.”

“You're as good as any two of both boys and girls,” said his mother gratefully.

In a little time the frisky young mules trotted off with the light wagon and the eggs, butter, cheese and smoked meat that were to be traded for spring clothes. Jimsey washed the dishes, made all very neat, then gave Grace a cup of milk and rocked her to sleep. Jimsey had a sweet voice, and Grace lying back on his arm, her big black eyes fixed on his face, listened until slowly her eye-lids fell, a pink flush crept

over her dimpled cheeks, and Jimsey said, "There—you're sound asleep, baby." He carried her through the open door to the bed-room and laid her in her crib. The window was open, and Jimsey concluded to leave it so and tuck the baby up a little more closely. In fact he covered her more closely than his mother would have thought needed.

Next Jimsey looked out to see if any red tongues hinted of reviving fire. None. Then he had a little conflict. When school closed, two weeks before, Jimsey had made up his mind to do ten examples each day in his arithmetic. Examples which he could not do, after honest trying, his father helped him with. No one had told Jimsey that he must do this—he had made no promise to parents or teacher. This day he had a book, brought over by a school-mate the day before; even glorious "Robinson Crusoe." How delightful to spend all that afternoon with Crusoe! "But I promised myself," said Jimsey, "and I'm going to keep my bargains with *me*. Come on, slate—we'll have those ten sums first."

He liked arithmetic, and was soon so deep in those sums that he forgot all else. Grace was a royal sleeper, and there was no sound except the call of a crow now and then, and from the barn the persistent bawling of a calf shut up

for the first day from its mother. The bawling of weaning calves was too familiar a sound to disturb Grace or Jimsey.

Neither did Jimsey hear a far less common sound, the dull steady padding of heavy steps and the deep steady breathing of great hot lungs, until through the open front door walked in an enormous—bear! Jimsey was sitting in the open front window, and when he saw the bear he, without stopping for a thought, flung arithmetic and slate at his visitor, rolled straight out of the window and took two steps for a run. Then he thought—Grace! He had promised to take good care of her—and he had left her to the bear! Jimsey would rather have been eaten by the bear himself than have its big teeth crunch the soft pink body of his little sister. Therefore Jimsey wheeled about and dashed in at the door faster than he had tumbled out by the window. Meanwhile the bear had sniffed at the slate and arithmetic, and had smelled warm live flesh—no other than baby in her crib. The crib was a high, strong, home-made one, and Jimsey had tucked baby in close, so the first affair of Bruin was to drag off the blanket. The big jaws were tugging at this when Jimsey burst like a whirlwind past the bear, and snatching the uncovered baby from the crib jumped out of that open bed-room window. That brought

Jimsey opposite an open door, the door of the out-kitchen, so into that refuge he darted and swung the slight door to behind him. The bear looked big enough to push that door down, and Jimsey, moreover, was now very angry with a brute so wicked as to want to eat the baby. In the kitchen stood a cupboard with perforated tin doors. "Baby could neither smother nor fall out there," thought Jimsey, so he put her on an upper shelf and locked her in. Next he climbed up to take the loaded gun from its hook and opened the out-kitchen door. He heard the bear growling terribly in the bed-room. He caught up a little box, ran and put it by the window, so that he could be high enough for a good aim, stepped upon the box, and brought his gun to his shoulder. The bear was still busy tearing the blanket, very angry at the disappearance of the baby. Hearing Jimsey place the box and climb up, the beast raised its head. Jimsey saw a double row of big white teeth, a great red throat, two burning eyes. Then there happened, all together, a loud crash from the gun, a horrible roar, the box fell over and Jimsey lay on his back, and the gun went—somewhere. Jimsey did not stop for the gun. He felt as if a thousand bears were after him! He rushed to the out-kitchen, took the screaming Grace from the shelf, and, as the coast was clear, ran with her

to the barn. He climbed into the loft and pulled up the little ladder, but he had heard how bears climb, so expected to see several of them coming up into the loft every minute.

Just at sunset father and mother Hunt drove up to the door with their purchases. No children were waiting.

“Oh, Jimsey, where are you? What is wrong?” cried Mrs. Hunt. Then she ran into the front-room, and there was a little stream of blood from the bed-room and a great bear lying by the crib. I think mother Hunt would have fainted, or gone crazy, if at that second she had not seen Jimsey running from the barn with a loudly crying baby!

“Who shot this bear?” cried papa Hunt.

“Is the bear dead? Then I did kill it!” screamed Jimsey.

Now mother Hunt had Grace in her arms and papa Hunt had Jimsey on his knee. “You are a hero, Jimsey!” he said.

“You saved baby’s life,” said mother Hunt.

“Not at first,” said Jimsey. “I was so scared I hopped out and left her alone; but that second I felt I heard God say ‘Where is your sister?’ just as he asked Cain about Abel. That scared me more than the bear, so I ran right back and grabbed Grace from under the bear’s nose. After I got to the kitchen I was only angry and wanted

to kill the bear. But when the bear looked at me and roared, and I shot, and tumbled, oh, I was all weak and shaky, and I could hardly stand. When we got up in the loft Grace screamed awful, and I felt as if I'd die! Then I thought of the verse I learned Sunday, that God gives his beloved sleep, and I prayed and said, 'Dear God, you love all babies, and Grace is one of your beloved; and please give her sleep, for I'm afraid she'll bring the bear here if she cries.' And then I tried to sing soft to her, and pretty soon God sent her to sleep.

"But I kept shaking and shaking, I was so afraid—not like a hero one bit, you see, papa; and so I prayed for myself. I said, 'Please, God, keep the bear away. I'm not David, I'm only scared Jimsey; but you kept the lions and bears from David, please keep them from me.' Then pretty soon I felt all right, and not afraid, and I went to the place where the board is broken out in the mow and watched there until I saw you come; and I didn't know what had become of the bear. You see, I was not a hero, papa, only a dreadfully scared Jimsey."

"Now I know you are a hero," said papa Hunt, proudly.

"I don't believe any of us would have been as brave as Jimsey!" said Robert.

“ I mak’ sure I wad hae rin,” said Alex; “ or at the best I wad hae shut mysel’ up in the cupboard wi’ the bairnie and lef’ yon auld bear to tear oop all that was in the hoose! I’m fearin’ there is little o’ the hero about me.”

“ I know I would have got the gun and shot the bear,” said Ben bluffly.

“ No, you would n’t,” cried Ned, “ you ’d have run, screaming like mad; and if you had got the gun you would n’t have come anywhere near hitting the bear.”

“ Little sons, hush,” said Mr. Danforth. “ It is not well to brag about ourselves or belittle our neighbors; and above all things brothers should hold together.”

“ Well, do n’t you wish we were acquainted with Jimsey?” said Robert. “ Mr. Slocum is his uncle; he said so. Jimsey lives in Nebraska. There was a reward of ten dollars for every bear killed in the state; and Jimsey’s father got it for him and put it into the bank to start a bank-account for Jimsey. Cousin Eunice, why did n’t you put that in? I told you to.”

“ Excuse my neglect; I forgot it, Robert.”

“ What do you suppose made the bear go there?” said Cicely. “ I did n’t know bears ran around loose in Nebraska.”

“ They do n’t,” said Robert. “ Mr. Slocum said there had n’t been a wild bear seen about

there for some years. The winter had been hard, and there was a woody mountain—a little mountain—a mile or two off from Jimsey's house, he guessed the bear came from that."

"Do you suppose it came to eat up that baby and Jimsey?" said Belle Danforth anxiously.

"I asked Mr. Slocum about that too," said Robert, who had evidently sifted the evidence very thoroughly. "He said no doubt the bear heard the calf bawling and wanted to get that. It was a hungry bear. Then as it came along it reached the house before the barn, and so it walked in."

"Glad I do n't live there," said Belle.

"Suppose I tell you a story now," said Mr. Vance. "I happened to-day to think of my cousin Ben Hone. We were boys together, but for some while I was not allowed to go much with Ben, for reasons which the story will explain. Afterwards I could go with Ben as much as I pleased. He is a business man now, and a good man: he has a pleasant home and a pair of nice boys; he also is a teacher in the Sunday-school. You see I am giving Ben Hone his certificate of good conduct before I introduce him to your society. If I were to put a motto to this story of my cousin it should be:

"How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

I wish you could all have had the privilege of knowing old Dr. Kane, the doer of the good deed; but he has been in heaven for ten years. Ben Hone will, I am sure, be one of the stars in that good man's crown of rejoicing. This story is especially for you, boys. I call it

“A SILVER QUARTER.”

“Ben Hone will soon be a very bad boy.” So the neighbors all said. Ben was absenting himself from church, from school, from Sabbath-school. He was going with bad boys, and instead of doing any useful works he was into every kind of mischief. One day Ben and his group of evil companions were sitting upon some boxes on a street-corner.

“How hot it is!” cried one of the boys. “Let's go and get some beer.”

“We have n't any money, an' they wont trust us,” said another.

“Ben, you get it from your dad; he's rich.”

“He wont give me any,” said Ben gloomily. Just then the boys saw Dr. Kane coming down the street; he came slowly, leaning on his gold-headed staff, his white hair fell about his shoulders and his long white beard lay on his breast; he was a picture of noble and venerable old age.

“Makes one think always of Abraham,” said one of the boys who had been to Sunday-school.

"Always minds one of the verse about 'a hoary head being a crown of glory if found in the way of righteousness,' and that's where he is," said another.

"He's the kindest-hearted man in town. See here, boys! Watch me get a quarter out of him," exclaimed Ben.

He bent down and slipped a pebble into each shoe and put one in his cheek; then rubbing his eyes hard, until they were red, he nearly closed them, as if almost blind, and so limped up to Dr. Kane. The good old man saw but poorly without his glasses, which he did not wear in the street.

Ben, going near to him, said in a lamentable whine, "Please, mister, give me a quarter to buy my dinner."

The old man looked at him and said gently, "Poor boy! lame and nearly blind—and so young!" Then taking a quarter from his pocket he put it into Ben's outstretched hand, and kindly patting him on the shoulder said, "God bless you, my son," and passed on.

Ben returned to the boys, the money shut up in his hand. He took the pebbles from his mouth and shoes and looked fixedly at the sidewalk.

"What cheek!" said one boy.

"That was sharp of you, Ben!"

“Come along and get us the beer.”

“Beer!” cried Ben fiercely; “I would n’t spend that quarter on beer, or any other kind of badness, for any price! Did you hear what he said to me—so as if he meant it: ‘God bless you, my son’! Oh, I wish I had n’t asked him for money!”

“Well, if you wont spend it, what will you do with it?” demanded the boys.

“I do n’t know,” said Ben miserably.

That quarter, fresh from the good man’s touch, given with a benediction, seemed clean and sacred to Ben. His own soiled hands and pocket with playing-cards in it did not seem clean enough for that money.

“I’m going home,” he said crossly.

He had thought of the top drawer in his bureau, a drawer kept so neatly by his good mother, everything in it nice and fresh and orderly, and smelling of lavender. He would put the money there.

When he reached his room it was clean, cool and shady after the hot, dusty street. He dropped the quarter in the top drawer, and feeling himself weighed down by that “God bless you, my son,” he threw himself on the foot of the bed to try and sleep it off. Still he thought of the money; suppose some one should find it in his drawer and take it. Perhaps he had

better hide it under the winter flannels in the bottom drawer. Well, if he touched it again he must wash his hands first. The cool water felt good to his hands, and the washed hands showed him how dirty his wrists were, so he went to the bath-room and took a bath. A bath made clean clothes necessary, so he dressed himself clean from top to toe. Then he hid the quarter under a pile of clean flannels. He was now too neat for his usual companions and haunts, and, besides, it was dinner-time. After dinner he lay down under a tree and fell asleep. He dreamed that all the birds sang gently, "God bless you, my son," and that all the leaves were silver quarters and rained down upon him and buried him. Finally he awoke, feeling as if that quarter weighed five hundred pounds and was on his back as fast as Pilgrim's burden. Perhaps if he did some good work he might forget that quarter. His mother wished so much to have the garden raked--he would do that. How pleased his mother was, and how his father's face brightened at seeing him at two meals in succession on time, looking clean and quiet! After tea he could not go loafing about with those boys; they would surely speak of that quarter. He went early to bed. When the light was out the quarter seemed to rise out of the drawer and cover the ceiling; he heard

Dr. Kane's voice, saw his venerable face. He slept, and now the quarter was a shield on his arm; now it was in his shoes; it was in his pocket weighing like lead.

At breakfast his father asked him to help him with some work in the garden, and at dinner his mother said she must go out in the country for three days, to see Cousin Mary, and she wanted Ben to harness the horse and take her in the buggy; he would have a good time at Cousin Mary's, she said: Josephine was there.

Now Ben regarded Josephine with awe and admiration. He had seen her but once or twice; she had been through college and had published a book. Of course she would not look at him, he hoped she would not, but he might regard her afar off, and the sight might take off his mind from that quarter.

However, Cousin Mary had been telling Josephine about Ben, and how terribly the family felt about his misdoings. Josephine invited herself to go fishing and raspberrying with Ben, and she sat in a tree in the moonlight with him and they talked. Ben hardly knew what they talked about or what he told her, but he privately "felt as if his mind had been turned inside out," and his evil companions and his recent actions looked very mean and vile and con-

temptible to him. Somehow, after that four days in the society of Josephine, it seemed manly to go to church, and the course of a reasonable person to do honest work; and Sunday-school did not appear babyish, and boys ought to be clean-lived, clean-mouthed and clean-bodied enough to speak to nice girls and sit bravely in their presence and talk sense. He went home feeling glad that Josephine was coming there for a visit of a week. Maybe he would tell her all about that quarter.

She came, and he did not tell her. The day after she left he put on his best suit, took the quarter in a new pocketbook and went to Dr. Kane's, asking to see Dr. Kane privately. Then he told him. "And there's your quarter, doctor. It is the biggest quarter and the heaviest quarter I ever heard of. Seems as if it was a thousand quarters!"

The doctor took the little silver disc.

"God heard my prayer. It has blessed you, my son. Here, take it again!"

"Oh, I cannot. Why, doctor, it crushes me!"

"No, my son, it will rather lift you up. Think a minute, as in God's sight: if you will try and live a better life, if you will ask God's help to do better, take this quarter again from my hand as a token of your pledge."

Ben waited for a moment or two. Then with

a deep breath he took that quarter from the good man's hand, and once more the doctor said in giving it, "God bless you, my son!"

"There, that is a right nice story!" cried the boys; "that Ben was a pretty bad boy at first."

"All because his parents did not look after him properly," said Mr. Vance. "It is no kindness, but a very great unkindness, to allow boys to choose their own company and run wild at their own will."

"There is time for one more story, if it is only a middle-sized one," said Robert, who never tired of stories.

"I could give you one, if you don't mind my reading one that has been printed," said Cicely. "I found it in some cuttings Madame Baron gave me for a scrap-book. You see, we children did n't care to spend all our afternoons just playing for our own fun; so we agreed to make up a box of playthings to send to the children's hospital. We have each made a scrap-book. We put in them cards or pictures, drawings, chalk pictures, verses, texts, stories, anything that might amuse children. Madame Baron had a big drawer full of such things up in the attic; and she let us get all that we needed to use. The boys made three fox-and-geese boards, and two boxes of jack-straws; and

Robert gave some dissected maps and pictures and a transparent slate. Bella and I cut out a dozen or so of stiff paper dolls, painted them and made suits for them; and Miss Eunice and Serena helped us all one afternoon, and we dressed six dolls—china, and bisque, and wax.”

“Why, we did n’t know you little folks were such busy bees,” said Mr. White. “I should like very much to see all these things.”

“So should we all,” said Mr. Tracy.

“They are in our play-room, in a big basket. We were thinking of packing them to-morrow. If Madame Baron allows us to bring them in here, we will.”

“I wish you would bring them,” said Madame.

Alec and Ned ran out and soon brought in the basket. Eunice spread out the trophies of the children’s skill and kindness on the table. It was a very creditable display.

“What are these?” asked Mr. Danforth. He held up six bags, tied two and two. In each pair one bag was silk and the other velvet, one full the other empty; they were small bags drawn together on a ribbon.

“Those are daily-food bags,” said Cicely. “We send those to the Old Ladies’ Home.”

“Please explain them; I don’t quite understand.”

“The plan is to put in the one bag three hundred and sixty-five paper slips, one for each day in the year. On each slip is written a text, or verse, or motto, or quotation—something nice to think about. You put in your fingers and take out one slip each morning. When you have read it, or learned what is on it, you drop it into the empty bag. By and by all the slips have changed bags, and you can give the full bag to some other body. Don't you know I got ten or twenty or even forty slips, from each of the people in this house. Ezra and Keziah and the others gave me some.

“There was great searching of the Daily-Food books, and the hymn-books. We only put one hundred and eighty-five slips in each bag, it takes so much work and so many people to get three hundred and sixty-five. These are six months bags.”

“Thank you, Cicely,” said Mr. Tracy. “I never had heard of such bags before. I shall remember about them. You cannot guess how such little gifts as these may be prized by old and young. One day I was visiting a sick lady of my church, and on her couch lay half a dozen quaint little paper dolls and a time-yellowed envelope. ‘I'm not playing with these dolls,’ she said, ‘they are helping me to remember. Thirty years ago I went to play with the

children of our minister, one day, and their mother, a busy woman, stopped her work to make me these little dolls because I admired those she had made for her little girl. Through all the joys and sorrows of thirty years I have kept these paper dolls. How often they have reminded me to be unselfish and to help others, doing cheerily the little where the much was forbidden to me!" But, Cicely, we are hindering your story-reading, and it is nearly nine."

"The children must surely hear Cicely's 'one more' story; it will not take long to read it," said Madame Baron.

"It is a very simple story, but I liked it," said Cicely, "perhaps because I am apt to be selfish and not like to have strangers claiming my time or attention. Mother often says I miss opportunities of

"ENTERTAINING ANGELS."

"With such a big family as ours one more makes very little difference. Mr. Lane is going home for a few days and he said I could use his room if I liked, so I will tell the 'Committee of Entertainment,' after prayer-meeting, that we can take one minister." Thus spoke Mother Bates.

"Yes, do," said Anna; "it is nice to do all that we can."

Mrs. Bates and her three daughters were washing the tea-dishes. Kit, the small black girl, their only servant, was brushing up crumbs, washing potatoes, and generally getting affairs ready for night and morning.

No one in the church would have asked Mrs. Bates to entertain a stranger: it was the general opinion that the Bateses had all they could do to get on, and that the Bates girls had a terribly hard time getting educated. Mrs. Bates was a widow; the only son was a helpless cripple, the three girls were ambitious for education; the sole means of income was represented by the boarders, and in Danberg board was cheap. Hard pressed as the Bates family found itself, they managed to have a share in all the church work. No one was surprised when Mrs. Bates said, "Send me one of the ministers," and a card was handed her bearing the words, "Rev. T. Rhode, Redfield."

The room was made ready, the three girls were just home from school and the cripple had been wheeled into the sitting-room to help entertain the guest, when there was a ring at the door, and one of the "Reception Committee" stood there with Mr. Rhode. The "committee" was a young man, but he blushed a little when, instead of the one "Rev.," he presented Mr. Rhode, also a delicate, weary-looking Mrs. Rhode,

and a child of two—a cripple who could not stand. Mrs. Bates was the “reception committee” on behalf of the family, and spontaneously her large, warm heart went out to the timid and tired stranger-lady.

“I knew it was a real imposition for me to come,” said Mrs. Rhodes.

“Come right in, and don’t speak of it. I’m real glad to see you,” said Mrs. Bates.

She carried the little child up stairs herself, and hastily added the rocker from the “girls’ room” to the furniture of the room loaned by Mr. Lane.

“I made her come,” explained Mr. Rhode. “Our house stands by itself, and she was alone and timid at night. She has not been a mile from the house for nearly three years, and one of our church folks opened his purse and gave her money for the trip and to do some shopping. He wanted Dr. Bliss here to see little Nell. Redfield is a very far back country charge, and stores and doctors are scarce.”

“It’s all right,” said Mrs. Bates, who was curling the child’s hair and petting it. “I’m sure, Mrs. Rhode, you ought to take an outing. I’ll send word to Dr. Bliss to come early tomorrow to see your baby. Just feel content, and we’ll give you a rest and make you have a good time. Now, are you ready to go down?”

Mrs. Rhode had brushed her hair, taken a clean kerchief, and was ready. The "company" being established in the parlor with Tom Bates and a spare boarder, Mrs. Bates adjourned to the kitchen, baby in arms.

"I'll admit that my heart sank when I saw a lady and a baby," she said to the girls, "we are so thronged. But she looked so timid and and apologetic and delicate that God gave me grace to be real cordial."

"You always are cordial, mumsy," said Anna Bates, cutting bread.

"I just reflected in a minute that the visit would be short, and if we made it pleasant it might be a long help and pleasure to her to remember. I think she is one of the people who get but few pleasures. Then I felt, if we seemed begrudging, we would feel, by and by, ashamed of it. Besides, girls, I always see our Saviour in the stranger at the door, and you know the words, 'a stranger and ye took me in.' 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.'"

"Why, mumsy, don't worry. We can do it. It will be all the same at the end of the year," said Ruth philosophically.

"The trouble though, girls, is," said Mrs. Bates, "that one of you will have to stay at home from school. If Mrs. Rhode is to have a rest, and any pleasure, one of us must keep the

baby and let her have a chance to go to the meetings and do her shopping and rest a little."

Ruth contemplated the plate of cold meat she had sliced. "Anna can't stay out; she's going to graduate in June, and every day counts with her," she said.

"And you can't stay out, Ruth," cried Hetty, who was moulding croquettes; "you were sick a month and had all that to make up; you can't afford any more lost time or you'll be thrown back a term."

"It seems as if it must be you, Hetty," said Mrs. Bates, getting cake out of the safe while she held the stranger-baby on her left arm.

"Of course it will be Hetty; she's tough," said that young woman briskly. "I like babies, and I'm a first-class shopper, if I am the youngest. I mean to borrow Mrs. Moore's buggy and take Mrs. Rhode and the baby riding, and you can tend baby to-morrow afternoon, little mother, while I take Mrs. Rhode to the stores."

"Yes, surely. You don't know how this cripple baby goes to my heart. I think of my grief with poor Tom. Anna, you run over to Dr. Bliss and tell him the case, and get him to come to-morrow morning. I'm so glad, girls, that you all feel as I do: that now the Lord has sent us this duty we must be real hearty in doing it."

“Of course. What sense would there be in turning disagreeable over it?” said the girls, and Hetty gave no hint of her burden in staying home three or four days, when algebra was such a hard study for her and she needed every class hour upon it.

“I knew it would do you good to come, Ada,” said Mr. Rhode that night. “I haven’t seen you look so bright for a year.”

“I felt it would be such an imposition on strangers,” said Mrs. Rhode. “I could not have done it, only for little Nell’s being seen by a famous doctor. I am glad I came; those dear kind people seem so willing to take us in; they are so good and sympathetic, and they are plain people, with plain things, and I am not afraid of them. That boarder, Mr. Hock, is going to study medicine, and his eldest brother is one of the surgeons in the big hospital in Cincinnati. He seemed real interested about Nell, and says he means to write to his brother all about her. Do you know, though, these three girls are trying to get through school so that they can teach, and they have that helpless young man and ten boarders to do for, and no servant but a little girl twelve years old! And they insist on my going out and leaving baby to them.”

“Well, you do just as they plan for you; that will be the best way.”

The Convention closed Thursday noon, but the Bates family insisted upon keeping their guests until Saturday morning. "Get all you can out of the trip," said Mrs. Bates cheerily to Mrs. Rhode. "I'm so glad if it is doing you good."

"You never can know how much good it is doing me," said Mrs. Rhode earnestly.

"It has done me good," said Anna. "I was in a terrible quandary about my graduating essay, and now I see my way plain through it, after hearing Mr. Rhodes tell about that mission he had when he was a student."

"And I believe I shall not have one bit more trouble making up my geometry, that I fell behind in when I was sick," said Ruth, "Mr. Rhode has such a good way of explaining those hard problems. I see right through them."

"You make us feel more glad that we came, if we have been any help to you," said Mrs. Rhode. "I know I can never thank Hetty enough for the way she has cared for Nell, and taken me about, and helped me in my shopping. I never saw such a girl in buying things."

"That is Hetty's particular forte," said Anna. "Although she is the youngest she does all our buying."

"I have a cousin who is head shopper in a great city store. She buys for the country cus-

tomers, and gets a good salary for it," spoke up one of the boarders who was lingering at the table.

"I believe there's my line in life when I'm through school," said Hetty. "I never heard of the business before, but I take to it immediately."

"I'm so thankful we made them real welcome and comfortable," said Mrs. Bates when her guests were gone. "The Lord just helped us to do it as unto him. I know they enjoyed it."

"It seemed rather a big undertaking at first," said Anna, "but how terrible it would be if we now looked back at neglect or grudging actions. You set us all a good example, mammy dear, and it would have been a pity not to follow it."

"Something may come of it besides your graduating essay, Nan," said Ruth, "for Dr. Bliss wrote to Mr. Hock's brother, the surgeon, and who knows but between them all, with the new surgery, they may cure that poor little Nell!"

The next July Anna received a letter from Mrs. Rhode begging her to come to them for a little visit. Anna after a year of hard work was needing a change, and gladly went. When she came home she reported that Nell had spent with her mother nearly two months in the great

hospital and, with the home treatment, was expected soon to be well. Also, by recommendation of Mr. Rhode, Anna herself had been given a position in an academy about ten miles from Redfield. "So the question of what I shall do for a living is settled very satisfactorily for next year. I tell you what, Mother Bates: out of my salary I mean to hire you a good, strong, grown-up servant, so you will not be working yourself to death as you have for the past four years, and Ruth and Hetty will have a little easier time finishing up their school course."

"We really did entertain angels unawares," laughed Hetty.

"See how when one gives in God's name, hoping for nothing again, the Lord himself sends us back 'good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over,'" said Mother Bates.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FALLING WATERS.

“Oh, use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as thou wilt, and when and where,
Until thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, thy joy, thy glory share!”

“LET me tell you, the river is going down ever so fast. Ezra says by Monday the men will be at the bridge repairing it. It wont be dangerous any more, now that the ice-blocks and drift are gone. I expect all our flood fun will be over in a week.” With these remarks Robert met Ned and Ben on Saturday morning. “I’ll be real lonesome when you go away,” he added to the boys, ignoring the fact that there had been some jarring between them, both in work and play, and that Cicely had more than once been obliged to act as mediator.

“Wont we miss the stories!” said Ben and Ned.

“Don’t your folks tell stories? I get ’em every evening.”

“We have them sometimes. I’ll tell you what, no one here has called out papa for a story. He says he can’t tell them. And he can’t

tell fairy stories or make-ups ; he makes a dreadful balk on them ! But you know, Robert, papa travelled about all over the world when he was a young man, and he tells the grandest Travelers' Tales ever you heard."

"Let us get after him for some to-day," said Robert.

Now it happened that Mr. Danforth had no confidence in his own powers as a story-teller, and he greatly objected to entertaining with his rehearsals what he called "the grown-ups of Madame Baron's Flood-Time Party," some of whom he considered proficient in the art of story-telling. Therefore he made a bargain with the juniors of the party that he should tell his tales that afternoon in their playroom in the granary, and that instead of one or two he would tell a number, if no one was admitted into the audience except the children. Also, the whole affair was to be a profound secret ; and the playroom doors were to be locked. Of course, all this mystery was arranged to heighten the enjoyment of one of the last periods of the story-telling. The boys thought in all good faith that it was arranged in behalf of Mr. Danforth's great modesty.

Very soon after dinner Mr. Danforth was escorted to the granary ; the doors were locked, a big easy-chair was pulled forward, a row of

children in comfortable attitudes placed themselves about it, and Robert, as master of ceremonies, announced, "Now we are ready."

"This morning," said Mr. Danforth, "I was looking over some of the books in Madame's library, and I found Cooper's 'Leather Stocking Tales,' in which I delighted much when I was a lad. A great-uncle of mine had known Cooper, and also the famous simple-hearted old trapper and hunter who has passed into fame by being placed in the books of our early American novelist. My great-uncle lived, when he was young, in Oswego, New York. Oswego was then a very small village, but important, as it lay at the mouth of a canal and on the lake where the trade came from the West and from Canada. Near neighbor of my great-uncle was Mr. M——; and now I will tell you about

"COOPER AND LEATHER STOCKING."

Early in the autumn of 1808 Fenimore Cooper, a lad of nineteen, a midshipman in the U. S. Navy, was ordered to Oswego, N. Y., to oversee the building of a brig for service on Lake Ontario. He brought with him to Oswego a construction party, and as war seemed imminent, and the lake towns on the American shore were practically defenceless, the building of the brig went busily onward through the winter.

Cooper secured board in the family of Mr. M —, a Scotch gentleman. The young midshipman was exceedingly fond of children, and the two little sons of his host attracted his attention. When he left the house in the morning to go to his shipyard he usually took with him the younger boy and, having kept him with him all the morning, returned to dinner with the child riding on his shoulder. The busy young shipbuilder found time to whittle toy boats and make dry-docks and shipyards for his little comrade. The elder boy, about eight years of age, though often invited, seldom appeared at the scene of work.

“Why is it that John will not come with me?” asked Cooper one evening at supper.

“John is entirely taken up with an old fellow out here in the woods, a hunter and trapper. The boy is fairly bewitched with him, and is off to his hut the minute my eyes are turned from him. I’m going to send to New York for a tutor and see if I can keep him in better company,” said Mr. M——.

“Why, what is wrong with the hunter?” asked Cooper.

“Nothing is wrong with him,” spoke up Mrs. M——. “He is a quiet, kindly, simple man, silent and mannerly, and never fails to get game when he goes for it; which is fortunate

for us, for we depend on him for our venison and wild fowl."

"He is silent enough about here," said Mr. M——, "but when he gets the boy off in the woods he tells him tales of Indians and hunting that drive him frantic. I'll stop all that. My boy cannot spend all his life in the woods; he has to go to college."

"The woods were my joy when I was his age," said Lieut. Cooper, smiling as he remembered that his passion for forests and fields and pedestrian tours generally had resulted in his dismissal from college; "and it seems to me, Mr. M——, that nature and a harmless old hunter are not the worst friends a boy can have."

"The old fellow consorts with Indians and eats loon," said Mr. M—— in deep disgust.

Cooper laughed: "I have done both, and never found myself a bit the worse for it! What is the old man's name?"

"He goes by several names, as people see fit to give them to him. He answers to any, but I doubt if he has ever told his real name. He has a history back of him, I suppose."

"Then it is a history of sorrow, not of wickedness," said Mrs. M——, who was evidently the hunter's partisan. "There's no harm in him."

“I reckon it is trouble,” said her husband. “He was here when I came, twelve years ago. I think he was about forty then, but he looked older. He told me lately that he meant to move away, the place was settling up too thickly; he wanted room to breathe. I wonder what he’d think of Glasgow.”

“He has seen cities, I’m sure,” said Mrs. M——.

“John, will you take me to see your friend?” Cooper asked.

“I’ll take you, but he doesn’t like to see people, and he may walk off and not speak to you.”

“I’ll risk it. If he does that I’ll go again. Once I’ve learned the way to his hut I wager I can make friends with him. Maybe he knows some of the chiefs of the Six Nations that I knew when I used to live at home.”

“You speak a good word for me to the old trapper and get him to make friends with me,” said Cooper next morning to John.

“He says you may come,” remarked the boy casually to the lieutenant a few days later, “but I had to coax him for a long time; and I told him you liked woods and hunting and Indians, and got turned out of college. He opened his mouth wide and laughed down inside of him at that.”

The next week the lieutenant and the boy made their way to the trapper's hut on the shore of the lake, where there was a thickly wooded knoll, about a mile and a half from the settlement. Knowing from the boy of the proposed visit the woodsman had roasted one of the "loons," a water-fowl so despised by Mr. M—— that he ranked eating it as next to cannibalism or clay-eating!

The trapper, the lieutenant and the boy found it very good and they sat hour after hour by the big fire, the hunter smoking some of the tobacco which the officer had brought with him. It was a November evening, the "hunter's moon" hung fair and low over the wide waters of the lake spread out beneath the cliff. Cooper, like the boy, had the art of making the old recluse talk. The hunter told of Indians, of frontier life, of battles, surprises, escapes, of hunts and feasts, and long hunger. Cooper listened and studied the man before him; his romance-loving nature filled in the lapses of the hunter's speech and made for him a past, idealizing him, surrounding him with a pathos and a sombre glory, creating from him Leather Stocking, the hero of those five famous "Leather Stocking Tales" which made of the whilom brig-builder, midshipman, country-gentleman the celebrated author. Two continents waited



for the output of the fascinating stories the germ of which had been planted in Cooper's mind by that camp-fire in the woods.

During the winter months Cooper saw much of the old man, and among his tales one which most fascinated him was the story of the great cataract whose waters in foam and thunder poured down the gorge of the Niagara River into Ontario. Thoughts of that wonderful spectacle kept the lieutenant waking. After the brig was finished, was launched, had proved a success, Cooper set himself to persuade the old hunter to accompany him to Niagara, that wonder in the woods which the Indians called the "Altar of the Great Spirit." After long persuasion the trapper agreed to cross the lake in the brig and guide Cooper through the woods to the Falls.

The boy John, in a frenzy to join the party, gave his father no rest until he too was permitted to go with Cooper and the woodsman.

Landing near Fort Niagara the three tramped through the woods along the river. The trapper's tongue was loosed; he told Indian legends and adventures at every mile of the way. But when from afar a deep roar and rush rose above the murmurs of the leaves and the voices of the birds he turned to his two companions and said, "Hush! now God speaks"—and so led

them at last through the thick woods to where the wonder broke full upon their view.

What the future novelist felt, who can say? The boy had received the crowning impression, the one magnificent memory of his lifetime.

“We have never read the *Leather Stocking Tales*,” cried the boys.

“You will when you are older; as a part of American literature they will be part of your literary education. Probably if you read many such books now it would distract your mind from history, and biography, and your school studies. Dinner comes before dessert, my little men,” said Mr. Danforth.

“Robert, does your grandmother, or your father or mother, look over all you read, and not let you read a lot of books that other people do?”

“Indeed they do,” said Robert. “When I get a new book from other folks I go right off and show it to them, or just as like as not it would turn out to be a kind they don’t allow and I’d have to drop it in the middle.”

“That’s the way with us. Papa Danforth, what more is there about old *Leather Stocking*?”

“My uncle and John M—— used to go to see him sometimes. He was a reverent man, of

simple ideas. He used to say that he felt much nearer God in the quiet woods than among people. Once the boys came upon him at sunset; he was standing, with his head bared and bent, facing the evening sky. They felt that he was worshipping and stood still until he turned. He said simply, 'I was saying my night prayers.' My uncle had just been reading Parnell's 'Hermit,' and he quoted the lines

" 'If with such tints God paints light vapors,
And sheds such glory o'er the sun's departure,
What must be He, great Source of all! "

The old man made him repeat it several times. My uncle said he never saw a person more innocent and unselfish, with a deeper sense of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, than this old trapper. He liked much to be at the family worship at Mr. M——'s. John M—— was a mischievous boy, and one day he said to the trapper, 'Do you expect to go to heaven when you die?'

" 'Why not?' said the old man calmly.

" 'Did n't you ever do anything bad?' asked John.

" 'Aye, plenty of it; but there was One who died for us; on him I rest it all,' said the hunter, and walked away.

" 'Now tell us a story about your travels,' said Ned.

“Have you any story that you never told even to us?” asked Ben.

“Did I ever tell you about my trip in the Himalaya Mountains, the high mountains that lie at the north boundary of India? It is not a story at all, but merely an account of what I saw away up there. I was obliged to go to India on some business, when Ben was a baby, and as I was detained there during the hot weather, waiting to see a man who had gone to Siam, I concluded it would be safer to leave the hot lowlands and visit a missionary cousin of your mother who did his summer work up on the highlands. After I had been there two or three weeks I thought here was just the time to make a trip farther north and higher up these magnificent mountains. My missionary friends encouraged me to take the trip, and aided me in my preparations. Thus ten years ago my face was set toward the Himalaya Mountains. Among the lofty peaks of Northern India lived a man whom I had long wished to see: the naturalist Wilson. A solitary priest at the shrine of Natural Science, this man lives year after year among almost inaccessible mountains.

“Over twenty years ago Mr. Wilson arrived in India as a trooper in a regiment of dragoons. Being taken very ill he was sent to Landour on sick leave, and there found surroundings in-

finitely congenial to him. He was a man who could look on his horse and his rifle as absolute friends, a seer of woodcraft, an intellectual kingdom to himself; what to other men was dismal loneliness was to him welcome rest. So fascinated was he with his sporting adventures at Landour that, having returned to England and been discharged from his regiment, this sturdy Yorkshireman resolved to return and live in a retreat where he had left more than half his heart.

“To the resolute nothing is an impossibility. Wilson worked his passage to Calcutta and, poor of purse and light in heart, cheerily shouldered his gun and small amount of luggage and walked to the Mussouri. A fearless and tireless pedestrian, he traversed the immense district before him until he had found a spot to his mind, and in the great interior range settled near the sources of the Ganges and the Jumna, the sacred and storied rivers of India. An ardent mountaineer, quarrelling with nobody, driving no hard bargains, averse from politics, he soon gained the sympathy of the natives, and the Rajah of Teree made him a present of a tract of land. Here he built a house, as a home for himself and a place of storage for his varied treasures. Here he dwells, a sort of king, among the mountaineers. Far and wide his fame is

spread—the *belatee sahib*, who befriends the villagers, encourages virtue, heals the sick, and does all that he can to improve the state of the highways. Scarcely one in a million would be adapted to this sort of life, or happy in it; but here is a man eminently fitted to his place.

“We pity the monks of St. Bernard, who live for three months of the year shut out by snows from all communication with the surrounding world. But here is a person who for nine months out of every twelve is almost buried in snow!

“The monks of St. Bernard are fops, men of the world, habitués of society, in comparison with this hermit of the Himalayas. They have a post once a fortnight; they are a dozen together; they see newspapers and travellers, and sitting about huge log fires can sip sweet wine, crack their jokes, and tell good stories. This hermit, on the contrary, scarcely sees an Englishman from one year’s end to the next; news from the lower world drifts to him months old. Kings die, empires change hands, battles decide the destiny of millions, plagues and conflagrations sweep over the world, and secure in his snowy eyrie he knows nothing of it all; his bulletin of daily news contains the haunts, numbers and habits of the goorul and the chickor, and the fights with the grim black bear. Our hermit’s

home is thirteen thousand feet above the sea level, and about six days' brisk travel from any other white man's abode.

"The name Himalaya is Sanscrit, meaning the abode of snow. As soon as the traveller ascends these mountain slopes he notices a marked difference in the natives; they are lighter in complexion, sinewy and active in frame, and vigorous but ungraceful in motion; a strong contrast to the indolent dwellers on the burning plains.

"In making my journey I engaged a coolie from Mussouri, named Myndar, as a guide; several friends and servants made up our party, and well-provisioned and equipped we took our way along the mountain roads, across apparently impassable gullies, and skirting precipices which overhung infinite depths. Our mountain fare was not to be despised: we had plenty of the favorite chupatties, eggs cooked in an endless variety of ways, rice pilau seasoned with red pepper, and game when we were fortunate enough to get it.

"Our coolie, Myndar, an experienced Mussouri hunter, shot for us a huge black bear, whose steaks and ribs made a famous addition to our fare, as in the cold night we gathered about our bivouac fire and cooked the meat spitted on sticks. We found also several bees'

nests in the rocks, and the honey was of excellent flavor. Besides the bear the only game we got was a 'barking deer,' or kakur. Bear's meat and venison, however, sufficed for our eight days' march, as we climbed higher and higher along the Himalayan ridges toward the grand cradle of the Jumna.

"The last day of our journey the road became inexpressibly bad; where there was not a hole a foot or two deep there was a ragged rut hidden by a tangle of briars and weeds; and where there was neither rut nor hole there was a vile flint boulder which cut through the boot-leather like a knife and unscrupulously barked one's shins. One of my friends must have measured miles with his full length: he seemed prostrate on his face for a great part of the time; no devotee making a pilgrimage to the birthplace of the god-river, Ganges, could have appeared more devout—after the Hindoo fashion.

"At the great elevation which we had reached the weather was bitterly cold; brambles with preternaturally long thorns encumbered our way; spiteful twigs, pushed aside as we journeyed on, sprang back and hit us little vicious, stinging cuts. Myndar in tranquil happiness pursued his course, never falling, never torn by brier nor beaten by bewitched branches, never break-

ing his shins nor marking, like American heroes, his way in blood. The son of the mountains, steadfast as that singular young man of Excelsior notoriety, pursued the even tenor of his upward way.

“One other affliction attended us: leeches infest the Himalayas, and morning, noon or night, in the damp shady places, they fix themselves upon the pedestrian’s legs and hold on most tenaciously. Amid all these miseries on the last night of our trip we reached a peasant’s hut, in which I made up my mind to lodge if by any means I might be free of leeches and be comfortably warmed. The homes among these mountains cling to the sides of the rock like little Swiss chalets; they are built of wood, are small, and not amazingly clean, while the furniture is singularly deficient.

“In answer to our hail a peasant woman appeared at the door of the dwelling; a rugged, muscular young person, who appeared amply able to defend herself and her castle. She was certainly no beauty; her thick lips and broad nose partaking of the negro type, but her skin was yellow, and her jet black hair was perfectly straight. Huge earrings ornamented her ears, she wore a striped woollen dress, reaching to the knees, below which descended a heavy skirt of brown cloth; wrapped loosely about her per-

son and over her head, something after the style of an Indian squaw, she wore a thick blanket woven in a herring-bone pattern laid in stripes. She gave us no greeting, but planting her feet firmly together rested one strong hand on her hip, and half closing her sleepy eyes stood still as a statue to hear what Myndar might say. Behind her shoulder peeped out her mother, a toothless old crone, while a child crowded into a corner of the doorway, gazing curiously; all three were similarly attired.

“We learned that the men of the family were on a pilgrimage. This was the sacred twelfth year, when the peasants climb Nanda Devi, and all who hold out to fulfil the journey keep a religious festival at the highest accessible point of that peak. Myndar shook his head. The women promptly declared their men would be of the successful pilgrims; they had reached the cliff twelve years before. Money, potent even in the Himalayas, secured me a lodging, and an addition of cheese, milk, and smoked bear’s meat for our commissary.

“At last we were near our goal; we were at the head waters of the Jumna and Wilson’s lodge could not be far away; he was out on a hunting tour, and we were hourly expecting to fall in with him. I pressed on before my comrades, and reached a rocky spur where a broad pano-

rama stretched before me; between two low ridges rolled the new-born Jumna, broad and shallow; its bed seemed a narrow plain covered with boulders rolled from the higher rocks; among and over these the young river flowed lazily, gathering strength, depth, and velocity as it passed along. Here-away was a line of flashing light where a narrow branch of the Jumna ran deep and clear under the darkling hills; yonder with bubble, rush, and foam it rioted over rocks, noisy and shallow. Just there I saw the man of whom I had come in search. Wearing huge boots reaching to his knees, he trudged along in the water, his hands in the pockets of his big beaver coat, his fur cap thrust back on his head, a rifle hanging by a strap upon his back, and a long pipe in his mouth. He was out looking after some traps, for he secures his "specimens" by snares, pitfalls, hunting, and any way which serves him best.

"Heartily welcomed, I felt my long tramp repaid. Our naturalist took us to his lodge, and we speedily made ourselves at home. I can scarcely imagine a greater treat than leisure and liberty to examine Mr. Wilson's wonderful collection of stuffed birds and beasts. His house was crowded with his treasures, and he has accumulated a handsome fortune by the sale of his rare specimens, his trade, through agents in

Mussouri, extending over all Europe. Never was there a more skilful taxidermist. Every wall, every corner, was occupied with some stuffed creature. Here a big black bear, with two cubs at her feet, showed her teeth, and glared in a corner, while the cubs rolled on their backs like merry kittens. What a comfort to consider that the beasts were dead, and filled with innocuous hay!

“On a shelf we saw a whole row of partridges. The black partridge of the Himalayas is especially beautiful: in looks like a black-cock, and has dark-red wings mottled with white and gray. There were also specimens of the *peura*, the *chickor*, and the snow and gray partridges. In the halls were varieties of deer, all fixed in attitudes of life; the jungle-fowl and the loongee-pheasants stood apparently preening and ruffling in the windows; the *moonel* and the *cheer* perched on the rafters, and flocks of *hunyal* and *koklass* kept guard over our beds. Little gray goats and barking deer seemed leaping at us from behind doors and out of cupboards. Among them all sat the naturalist, with the happy look of a man who has found something to do and is doing it; a new Robinson Crusoe, monarch of all he surveyed, surrounded by his speechless dependents. Our friend is not forgetful of the world he has left, but he turns in his conversation

frequently to the new, strange world in which for twenty years he has passed his whole time.

“No hardy traveller could traverse scenes of greater beauty than are to be found among the Himalayas; the vastness and sublimity of these ranges are relieved by a wonderful variety of striking and beautiful details. The steepness and ruggedness of the pathway, the keen cold air, the wildness of the whole locality demand other than dainty and feeble tourists; but give a man nerve, muscle, and a love of nature in all its first simplicity, untouched by art, and his trip through the Himalayas will be the glorious holiday of his whole lifetime; more especially if in the course of that trip he visits the Hermit of the Himalayas.”

“Oh, but would n't I like to travel!” cried Robert.

“You travelled so much, papa,” said Ben and Ned, “that it will be only fair play to let us have as good a chance, when we grow older, and go round the world too.”

“That will depend entirely upon circumstances, little lads.”

“Mr. Danforth, were you ever in Africa?” asked Robert.

“Yes. I travelled in Africa for two years.”

“I wish you'd tell us an adventure about

that. Grandma knew Dr. J. Leighton Wilson, the famous Congo missionary: he was the one who truly first discovered the big gorilla. He taught Paul Du Chaillu. He wrote a splendid book about Africa. Cousin Eunice has been reading it aloud to us. There was a lady here visiting us last fall, and she had been a missionary in Africa; Mrs. Ainsley had some friends in England who knew that young missionary, Mr. Lapsley, who went there to the Congo and started a mission, and died in two years. Mr. Sheppard, the black missionary who went with him, was made a member of a great Royal Something society, in England, because he discovered things in places where no other missionaries had been. Mrs. Ainslie's friends wrote her all about Mr. Lapsley, from England, and we were so sorry when he died. I do n't see why God lets people die just when they are doing so much good work."

"Remember the text, Robert, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.'"

"I'd rather hear about Africa than any other land."

"I will tell you about my African servant Bombo. Perhaps it will make you more earnest to work for missions when I tell you of the darkness of

"BOMBO AND HIS LAND."

ONE who travels for the love of it, who has a passion for adventure, will sometime surely be lured by the tropic splendors, the burning heats, the strange animal and vegetable life and, above all, by the mysteries of Africa. I entered Africa from Spain, crossing the Straits of Gibraltar and landing at Tangier. I had thought of journeying through the Barbary States, going down into Egypt, and ascending the Blue Nile. However, I left Abyssinia for a future journey, and directed my course toward Senegambia.

I believe people think that to travel in Africa one needs a great retinue, ox teams, dozens of guards, and servants, and, in general, all the paraphernalia of a state progress. I never made set tours in this style anywhere; and when I was in Africa I found I could journey about, going as I pleased in a humble way, making myself at home, and having with me only a servant or two. It will be seen at once that I did not ape Livingstone or Du Chaillu; I was neither geographer nor author. I went to please myself, and my ambition was small.

At Nun, in Southern Morocco, I came across Bombo, a full-blooded negro guide. It seemed to me then that I engaged him for my major-domo, but now, in the light of past experiences,

I have come to believe that Bombo engaged me as a sort of personal banker. From the hour when we concluded our bargain on the public square of Nun, Bombo to me was Africa, and Africa was—Bombo. There had been a time in this person's history when a string of China beads and a paper collar had constituted for him entire full dress. That day had gone by. Bombo wore hat, shirt, trousers and shoes; he knew the meaning of money; he knew everything, or at least he thought he did, which served about as well.

Bombo was able to tell me when to travel and when to delay; what to eat; where and how to go; what to provide; and how to conduct myself. He did all this with the utmost humility and self-devotion of language, and an unmitigated contempt and suspicion for all other "brack folk;" and before I was aware he had become the immediate disposer of myself and all that was mine.

Under Bombo's supervision I sailed from Nun to Saint Louis, at the mouth of the Senegal. Bombo was a Senegambian. The people of Senegambia may be divided into foreigners, as French and English who have come there for trade; native negroes, and a mixed race of Moors and negroes. The blacks are generally lawless, ignorant, and frightful. Bombo, of

course, was an exception. Bombo told me that he was of the kingdom of Jaloof, which borders the Senegal and the sea. His countrymen cultivate a little land ; raise pigs, fowls, and beef cattle ; fight ferociously, sell their prisoners of war for slaves, and are excellently well dressed when they have a yard of cotton cloth wrapped about their loins. At St. Louis we saw many families of the mixed race. These people are handsome and agreeable, light-skinned, tidy, intelligent, and, for the tropics, industrious.

I desired to ascend the Senegal, and while we were waiting for boats, rowers and outfit I formed a little camp on the north shore of the river some ten miles from its mouth. My comrades were a Frenchman who was travelling for amusement, an English trader, Bombo, and three other servants. Probably this region between the Senegal and the Sahara is the hottest place of its latitude ever yet entered by man. The burning winds of the desert seem to scorch like the mid-day sun ; neither sea nor river appears to have coolness or refreshment.

In the lazy currents of the creeks lie hideous alligators, while the boa wraps its huge length about the trees that rise above the marshes. Down to the Senegal comes the hippopotamus to lave and wade ; and him the lion follows, ready for a fight.

Camp life amid such surroundings was certainly somewhat exciting. With our fires blazing to keep away wild beasts, our hammocks slung on carefully inspected trees, and our guns and rifles loaded and ready to hand, we were wont to lie in the evenings, talking of our homes, or listening to Bombo's incessant tongue. His chief forte was extolling his country—Jaloof. There was not, in his estimation, such another land under the sun. Jaloof had camels in its deserts; elephants could be *killed by the million*. When our trader demurred to this statement, Bombo vowed they could at least be killed by the dozen yearly. Resinous gums dropped from the trees; Bombo would make nothing of collecting a few thousand pounds of caoutchouc; hemp was to be had for the raising, and indigo without raising. The swamps were full of rice, and Bombo wanted to know if in England we could get cassia and cardamoms, as they could in glorious Senegambia. When in this vaunting mood Bombo frequently relieved his feelings by condemning the mixed races of Senegambia. His virtuous indignation rose high over the thought of their keeping slaves.

“But, Bombo,” I ventured to suggest, “you Jaloof men sell slaves; is that not just as bad?” Bombo thought not. Jaloofs sold slaves because they wanted money, and he seemed to think that

this virtuous end sanctified the human trade. Besides, Jaloofs only sold prisoners of war; if men did not want to be sold, why did they fight the all-conquering Jaloofs?

Bombo had lived among missionaries long enough to think he knew something about Biblical matters. Judge of our feelings when he vehemently insisted that our venerable first parent, Adam, was a black man.

"Course he brack," said Bombo stiffly.

"How comes it, then, Bombo, that so many of his children are white?"

"Too much water," said Bombo, who had a hearty aversion to that fluid. "Velly much water fade 'em all out."

What then! We with our Saxon pride of race; we of light skins and locks and blue eyes, with features we had privately esteemed, were only Bombo and his brothers faded by generations of inconsiderate use of cold water! Misinterpreting our silence, Bombo proceeded to inform us that, however wise men might differ, Eden had undoubtedly been in Senegambia, somewhere near Jaloof territory. Hence had gone out the black tribes who clung to Africa, avoided water, and retained undiminished the characteristics of their progenitor.

"Adam," said Bombo, "velly mad at him boys when dey all fade out; shook 'um so hard

dere teef drop out when dey grow old. Adam's teef nebber drop out, nor brack men's."

Here was a new tradition of the race. To increase our consternation, Bombo next informed us that Solomon was also a black man; as black as himself. Solomon had cleared the great desert of Afrites, having driven them before his chariot, wherein sat the Queen of Sheba; the Afrites fled like a flock of chickens, and all tumbled into the ocean near Cape Blanco.

After this we never dared to mention the early-world heroes before Bombo, fearing to be deprived of all comfort in their memories.

After many wearisome delays we were prepared to make, as far as might be, the ascent of the river. The season had been favorable, and there was a fair stage of water. Steamboats run on the Senegal from St. Louis to Medina when the water is high enough. We preferred the liberty and leisure of our canoe excursion.

We rested a few days at Bakel, and several more at Medina. Above Medina navigation is difficult; there are many portages, where falls and rapids and huge rocks towering out of the bed of the stream obstruct the passage. Many miles of the way could only be accomplished by having the men clamber along the shore, towing the boats with a line.

The scenery of the Upper Senegal is grand

and beautiful in the extreme. From Medina to Banganoura, and thence to Gouïna, was one splendid panorama of boiling rapids, dense forests, stately trees, strange cliffs and peaks, and spray-veiled cataracts. The Falls of Félon were a scene to enrich a lifetime. The height of the fall is not great, but it stretches in an even line the whole width of the broad, shallow river; masses of tropic verdure seem piled to the sky on every hand, and beyond, two strange peaks lift up like towers fashioned by giants in some olden day. They are unique, like only to each other; square-cut at the summit, furnished with minarets as graceful as Moorish fancy ever wrought in marble; green, with palm and casia and oak and fig, until the ascending forest changes into the purple of distance, and the purple shades into a deep blue against a primrose sky.

We still ascended the river toward Mausolah. The people were very busy digging groundnuts, of which here you can buy two bushels for a yard of common longcloth. When we varied our expedition by rambles along shore gazelles and antelopes bounded by us; hares and partridges were to be had for the shooting; monkeys mocked us from every tree, and flocks of paroquets were as tame as crows in the north.

At last we reached the cataracts of the Gou-

ina. Here the river is nearly seventeen hundred feet wide, and as the water was now at its lowest the height of the fall was sixty feet. We tarried a fortnight at Gouïna, exploring the country and considering its products and resources. The choice tree, both of Eastern and Western Africa, is the Wine Palm. Its smooth, straight column shoots up into the air and is crowned with those magnificent clusters of leaves of which each one is a fountain holding the liquid the African toper prizes above his chief joy. When I first stood before one of these trees my grand wonder was how the fluid of the leaves could be obtained. Bombo readily undertook to explain it practically. A group of negroes who had been getting wine lay resting a few rods from us. Bombo went to them, and presently returned with a gourd bottle slung to a strap of antelope skin and a stiff thick rope made of palm fibres.

By aid of this rope the triumphant Bombo walked up the erect palm about as easily as a fly walks up the wall of a room. The rascal was certainly agile, and was dressed as lightly as possible, having laid aside the European garments wherein he delighted and arrayed himself only in a braided palm cap and a cotton breech-cloth. He tied the rope in a ring passed about the tree trunk and his own waist, giving

himself room to lean back and brace himself against it. He seized the rope with a hand on either side, and grinning his triumph at my astonishment up he went in a series of jerks. Having reached the leaves he tapped them scientifically, and filled his bottle with the abundant juice which flows from the under surface. This, fermented, becomes a vinous drink capable of making Bombo and his brothers both mad and merry.

A less dangerous product of this region is millet, of which great crops are raised with little difficulty, and which furnishes the chief living of the people. The women grind the millet in stone jars or urns, by pounding the grain with a heavy club.

Nature has been prodigal of gifts in this country. Iron is everywhere, fish is plentiful, game abounds; gold is also here, where is no hand of man to gather its precious grains. The mountains of Maka, in shadowy defiles, in purple heights, and in musical watercourses, are like childhood's dream of fairy-land.

Yet, in spite of all this wealth and beauty, Bombo and his brothers are given only to war and plunder. Fierce, lazy, beggarly, half naked, they are the blots on the fair face of nature, instead of the highest expression of her perfection.

What shall we do for Bombo and his broth-

ers, living in such a beauteous and bountiful land, yet living like the wild beasts which make their lair in the jungles?

This is a region seldom visited, a *terra incognita*; all the more alluring on that account. In 1859 Monsieur Pascal went as far as Bafoulabé, and later Lieutenant Mage reached Foukhara. M. Quentin has also been here, making topographical surveys. My own humble party had no grand designs in view; we went as far as we could, and were sorry not to go farther.

The river had from the dryness and extreme heat become very low; fevers were prevalent, and a Senegal fever is something to be wary of. Bombo said we had better get back toward St. Louis. If we went to the southern part of Jaloof land Bombo believed he could show us several things worth seeing. Now the fact is Jallon is for the most part an uninhabited wilderness; granite and volcanic rocks abound, the coast is low, dreary, and sandy, yet, led by our evil genius in the person of Bombo, after we returned to St. Louis we struck southward, and found our tents set up one night upon the shore, in the midst of the very solemnity of desolation. A barren sky stooped downward to a barren sea, and the barren land stretched behind us in hopeless distances. It was as if we had gone, living, to some undiscovered region within the shadow

of death. Out of the blackness and hush of the night broke now and then a wild, mournful, prolonged cry—the howl of hyenas. I walked a few rods seaward: the waters lapped with a dull monotone on the beach. I paced back beyond the circle of our fire-gleaming and in the gray twilight saw four strange tall figures, swinging soundless by, as if in mid-air. They were four belated camels, and their riders brethren of our Bombo. They added themselves to our group, and a strange picture we made. The three black tents were pitched near together. The mules and horses were tethered close by. The Europeans sat waiting for their supper, which the seven or eight black Bombos were preparing at the fire. The red gleam bronzed the swarthy faces and shone on the white teeth and the rolling eyes; the camels knelt between the tent and the sea, and sociably tried to poke their noses under the curtains.

Usually black men together are noisy, either as garrulous or quarrelsome; but these were quiet as ghosts. The spell of that wilderness of Jallon was on them, and oppressed even their untutored, childish spirits. When the supper was over, and the others had lain down to sleep, Bombo came and sat near me as I held my watch until midnight. He tried to encourage himself a little by boasting of the ivory, wax, and gums

which Senegambia exported, and by details of the prowess of the Jaloofs in battle; then he endeavored to keep up his spirits by hints of the adventures and sights awaiting us on the river Gambia, but all in vain; Bombo was blue, and his talk would drift off to spectres and warnings, to unburied skeletons that paced the desert, where they died, during all these doleful nights.

“What is the matter with you, Bombo?” I asked.

Bombo shook his head. Then he informed me that to-morrow would be new moon, and before the moon finished her course again she would “eat men,” maybe even eat the bragging Bombo.

“Why, Bombo,” I said, “you used to be bolder than this; you have been in many wars, and say you have killed lions and elephants: what now?”

Bombo groaned; lions and elephants and Katoba and Kadoo men were a mere nothing. Bombo could swallow them at a mouthful when his heart was great; but the moon was quite another matter: the moon eats men every month, and could swallow this Bombo if she chose.

However, next morning, Bombo was out in all his glory again. Sunshine chased away his melancholy, and spear in hand he went strutting

and bragging about, willing to lead us to the Gambia, or the world's end, if we wished to go so far.

"That is fine, fine!" cried Robert.

"How can any grown up person be so dreadfully ignorant and think such silly things as Bombo," said Ned.

"Easily enough," said Mr. Danforth, "if neither he nor his ancestors have ever been taught anything. We civilized Christian people are the ones to blame for the ignorance and degradation of Bombo."

"I wish," said Robert, "that we had a lot of money—six millions, twenty millions—to build schools and churches and work-shops, and lay out farms, and all that, all over Africa; and in a little while make it just as nice and sensible as—as our kind of countries."

"The promise has been given, for all lands, that in the beautiful ages yet to come 'the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them—and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of God, the excellency of our God,'" said Mr. Danforth.

"It will be grand when all that comes true," said Ben.

"You can all do your share to hasten the grand time, my lads. And now I think I have done the fair thing by you, and told my part of the tales, so you ought to unlock this door and let me out."

"We are ever and ever so much obliged; we have had a delightful afternoon listening to you," said Cicely.

"Wish it was just beginning, instead of just ended," said Robert, but he unlocked the door and away they all scattered.

CHAPTER XII.

BREAD CAST UPON THE WATERS.

“ In the elder days of art
Builders wrought with patient care
Each minute and hidden part,
For the gods see everywhere.”

SUNDAY morning was a marvel of beauty: the river was rapidly falling, the roads were dry. What with Madame's carriage, Mr. Danforth's surrey, the saddle-horses and the spring wagon, every one was provided with means for going to church at Tipton. Mr. Tracy had been invited to preach there, and Mr. White was to address the Sunday-school. The procession started early from Madame's house; the boys with Peter and Ezra in the spring wagon. There was much discussion among the boys whether Mr. Tracy or Mr. White would be the more interesting speaker; also, whether there would be any announcements given about the devastations of the flood, and about the people who needed help. “I know,” said Robert, “that grandma will just fairly send out wagon loads of things; she always does: and yesterday I saw

them folding and sorting the things that have been sewed these days, and you never saw such a pile in your life—clothes, quilts, and sheets, and towels, sunbonnets, hoods—my! just packs!”

“My papa will hand out lots of money for the sufferers; he always does,” remarked Ned, determined not to let all the boasting be on Robert’s side.

“Alec, why do n’t you say something?” cried Ben.

“I hae na onything to say, nor onything to gie,” replied Alec. “Wasna I pu’ed oot o’ yon water, by Master Perkins here, wi’ nae-thing but an old suit o’ claes upo’ me? Whiles ithers ha’ lost in this awfu flood I hae foun’; an’ oot o’ the waters the guid Lord gied me hame an’ friends. Mrs. Ainslie says on Wednesday I maun begin school wi’ Mr. Vance, an’ when she gaes hame to Scotlan’, I’m gaen wi’ her; an’ I will be colleged there in Edinburgh town. Ah, sirs, that will be gran’!”

“And what will you do after college?” asked Ben.

“Gif the Lord will but let me climb the poopit stairs I’ll ask no mair. I’d rather be a minister nor a king,” said Alec eagerly.

“Well, now, I don’t think I want to be a minister,” said Ned. “I’d rather be a doctor, like that Duncan who did the errand for God.”

"I would n't," said Ben. "I'm going to be business, like my papa. What will you be, Robert."

"Do n't know," said Robert. "I change my mind pretty nearly every day; only I mean to be something with a lot of go in it."

"It doesn't matter so much what you do provided it is honest and done honestly, as if God marked all the ins and outs of it," said Ezra.

"Aye. That is what makes good fair work." said Peter.

On the homeward road the discussion was of the announcements of help needed that had been read in the church.

"I expect, Ezra," said Robert, "that grandma will send you off early to-morrow with this wagon loaded, and Cousin Eunice with you to distribute, and you'll go to those folks that were drowned out of everything up here at Peak's Landing."

"I reckon," said Ezra.

"Wish we boys could go along," suggested Robert.

"Well, you can't," replied Ezra with great decision.

"Look here! what do you think!" cried Ned. "I heard Cicely Lyman begging her mother to go and get that little girl baby that was the only one saved from a house—all her

folks dead: one the minister said was at Squire Maybank's waiting for adopting. Mrs. Lyman said she and Cicely would go to-morrow and see the child, and maybe they would take it. I say they ought; they have plenty of money, and a nice home, and no child but Cicely. Why did n't she say 'yes' right straight off, I wonder!"

"Because people that intend to do things right, and to stick to what they begin, take time to think about it first. Slow and sure. Think and stick. That's it," said Ezra, who never missed an opportunity to get in some "advisement," as he called it, to the boys.

At dinner the care of this child for adoption was brought up, and a discussion opened among the grown people to which the juniors listened decorously, if without absorbing interest.

Cicely had said, "Of course the worst thing that can happen to a child is to lose its parents."

"Not always," said Mr. Vance.

"Oh-o-o-o!" said Robert in a shocked tone.

Mr. Vance continued, addressing his remarks to the hostess:

"Whatever may be the theory that the well-being of the child is of primary importance to the parents, and by them best conserved, practically it is shown that a large number of parents are totally indifferent to the real interests of their children. Thousands of illiterate parents

are even resentful of efforts to raise their children to a higher educational level. A law enacted in Boston against infant street venders aroused strong opposition. At that time Beacon, Washington and Tremont Streets and the Common were haunted by half a dozen children, from five to thirteen years of age, selling matches, pencils, sponges. A lady clothed one of these urchins, but the next snowy night found him in his former rags, and questioning elicited the information that 'Pop said 'e sold more in ole cloes.'

"These children were found to belong to one family, and a six o'clock visit to the parents discovered them feasting on porterhouse steak, Mocha coffee, cream bread, gilt-edge butter and olives, while the children peddled in the storm. The man, a skilled brass-worker, could earn \$25 a week, but did nothing, having discovered that his brood earned more on the street corners. The records of crippled and idiot children, and the slaughter of the innocents in factories and mills, a thousand-fold justify the most stringent legislation concerning child-labor. In an equally imperative fashion the infant citizen demands the interference of the parenthood of the State, that is, in regard to the correction or amelioration of congenital infirmities and deformities."

"You are right," said Mr. Danforth, "and

when I go back to the State Senate I have made up my mind to work hard for laws to cover exactly these points. My attention was only called to it lately, but there is abundant need for legislation."

"I see a great amount of such need," said Mr. White, "travelling the country as I do as a colporter. I could give you several instances. Instances may be more potent than arguments. In New Jersey I knew of a farmer of small means who had two daughters and a son born club-footed. The doctor told him that the children should be early taken to the city hospital for surgical remedy of the defect. The reply was, he 'had n't no money to spend on 'em;' 'reckoned they could get on as they was made;' 'had n't no time to go, and could n't spare his woman from the work.' Consequently the State has a crippled man, mentally as well as bodily injured by his defect, and two women shut out from marriage and debarred from any means of support but the needle. Another case of club-foot had similar event because a weak-minded mother 'could n't have the poor baby hurt.'"

"I shall be thankful to you, Mr. White," said Mr. Danforth, "if you can give me more such instances. I shall embody them in a speech which I am preparing."

Said Mr. White:

“ I know in Missouri is a girl with very bad hare-lip. A Kansas City surgeon has offered to be responsible for a cure ; a surgeon nearer home proposed to perform the operation freely and pay for the nursing ; a leading St. Louis surgeon agreed to attend to the cure if I could send the child to him. I offered to provide outfit and all expenses. The replies to all these offers ran thus : ‘ T ain’t much matter.’ ‘ We’re us’t to it.’ ‘ Need her to ’tend baby.’ ‘ Might hurt her.’ ‘ Do n’t b’lieve in it.’ ‘ Wont let her go ’less my outfit an’ board’s paid to go too’ (this from the mother). ‘ Th’ old woman sha’ n’t get a trip that way ’less I do’ (this from the father). Meanwhile the child, who is bright and keenly sensitive, lives a life of agony, hiding from sight, crouching about with a rag or apron over her marred face. Near by is a boy with a defect in one eye which might be cured, only his parents say they ‘ dread it so.’ ‘ Seems cruel.’ ‘ Scarcely notice it any more.’ Meanwhile here is a man to be lifelong hindered by this blemish.”

“ You remember,” said Mr. Vance, “ the story Miss Eunice told us about Tip and Tric, the deaf mutes?”

“ Yes ; compulsory education for the deaf and dumb is imperatively demanded. In some States there is a law that all cases shall be re-

ported to the county clerk, and where the parents are unable to send the child to the State institution the township or county shall assume the expense. But there is no law to compel the parents to educate the mute child. I know of a case where three mutes in one family were refused the benefits of a free education, including clothing, because the children were needed to work at home. 'No sense in teaching dummies.' 'They didn't mind it.' 'Leave 'em as the Lord made 'em,' etc. One instance was that of a lad of eighteen, who had been deprived of instruction, but hearing of the State institution for mutes walked barefoot and penniless for sixty miles to pray for that aid which the State provided but did not compel his parents to accept in his behalf."

"The case of the Child and the State," said Mr. Danforth, "is of primary importance. How far should the state compel education and bodily care?"

"We will discuss this further in the library," said Madame Baron; "our little people were at long services this morning, and they look tired."

Robert ran up to his grandmother and patted her cheek, "You always think of what is nice," he whispered.

As they rose from the table Cousin Eunice proposed that the children who wished to hear

a story or two should go with her to the attic. "It is pleasant up there, and you can sit and lie about at your ease," she said, "and listen and talk as you like. Take along a basket of apples and that dish of oranges, and you shall have a 'Free and Easy.'" Cicely, the four boys, Belle Danforth and Eunice were soon in the big airy attic, fragrant with all manner of dried herbs hanging from the beams.

"What is the first story, Cousin Eunice?" cried Robert.

"JEAN'S PERSONAL INTEREST SOCIETY."

"What do you do when you want to start a society?" said Jean to her family, assembled at breakfast.

Franklin, who was sixteen years old and knew everything, promptly responded, "You get them together and vote that you'll start a society. Then you elect a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, and you get up a constitution. After that you have meetings, and if there is any work to do you do it."

"I've been reading about the Personal Interest Society in Philadelphia, and how much good it has done, and I thought I'd like to start one here," said Jean.

"There is another way to start a society," said her mother. "It is for a person who sees

the need of a certain work being done to go quietly to work and do as much of it as possible. Then some second person is interested and drawn into the work, and then a third, and as the work moves on, increases, brings good results, the number of workers is found to warrant the organization of a society. If you feel drawn to this personal interest work, why not select some needy family and begin? Start, and a way will open before you."

"You see," said Jean, flushing, "I'd like to do it, but should not know how to begin."

"That objection would meet you from every one of the members of the proposed society when you first called them together," said her father. "If you had wrought out the how problem first for yourself, as your mother proposes, then you could give them at least one example of a plan of work."

"I'll tell you how to do it," said Franklin. "Pick out a family without knowing whether in their own opinion they need or desire help. Put on your best bib and tucker, flowers, feathers and furbelows, rush in on them, find fault with their dirt, disorder, noise and lack of the æsthetic. Give them soup tickets and coal orders, and if the family is all boys, send them, from the Dorcas society, a big bundle of girls' aprons and skirts."

“Oh don't you think you're funny!” said Eliza, seeing that Jean looked miserable.

“Jean would not make such mistakes as that,” said the mother, “because she has the divine gift of sympathy; and such hearts are able to put themselves in other people's places and fulfil the rule, ‘Do unto others as you would that they should do to you.’”

“I believe,” said the wise Franklin, “that all these societies only make paupers. There are societies for giving people food, clothes, doctoring, nursing, teaching, books, vacations, fresh air—every thing that folks want; and so people learn to lie back and be pauperized. I don't believe in it.”

“The Personal Interest Society is not to make paupers, but to give people friends,” cried Jean. “To bring folks together that have been separated by belonging to different classes and to help people to help themselves. It finds work for folks, and lifts them to their feet, and then leaves them to take care of themselves.”

“I think, Jean,” said her father, “that you know all that is necessary to the starting of a personal interest society of one member. I believe you will do good, and as your work grows you can bring some one else into it. Maybe you will find some forlorn old fellow for me to

take a personal interest in. If you are drawn to this work, begin it."

"Only I do n't know how, nor where," sighed Jean.

"Keep your eyes and ears open, and hasten slowly," said her mother.

"And maybe you can find me some little girl to take an interest in, and make a doll for, and mend up my playthings for, and have here for a Saturday visit," said Eliza.

"Look at the clock," said the mother, and with a simultaneous dash Franklin, Jean and Eliza were after hats and school satchels.

The prim, orderly street between home and the high school did not afford suggestions in the personal interest way, Jean thought, except that as she passed a window, in which for weeks a pale, thin lady had been sitting, each morning, in an invalid's chair, she saw the lady looking so earnestly at her that, before she thought, she bowed as to a friend, and the lady looked pleased.

The last hour of the school session had come when Jean, looking up from her algebra, saw at the blackboard a thin, freckled, plain girl whom she did not know. She had noticed her sometimes as evidently the poorest girl in the school, very timid and lonely; no one seemed to know her. Jean remarked to herself how very shab-

by and scant her clothing was and how sad and anxious her face. As Jean looked at her the girl despairingly laid down her chalk. "I can't do this problem," she said.

"This is the second day, and I explained it all to you carefully yesterday," said the teacher irritably.

"I know you did, but—some way—I could not see into it."

"Come prepared to-morrow," said the teacher sharply.

The girl returned to her desk, and with a hopeless face gazed at the arithmetical problems which were to her so dark.

Jean felt sorry for her; she herself found mathematics so easy. Suddenly the thought came, "Maybe here is my personal interest work!" After school Jean slipped away from her chosen friends; she was intent on following the strange girl. Already she was almost out of sight—she always was in such a hurry! Making the best effort she could Jean was only able to keep the girl in sight through streets growing shabbier and shabbier, and finally lose her in the door of a house at the corner.

"She lives on the first floor; there are several families in the house," said Jean to herself.

Next morning she packed double lunch, nicer than common, for recess, started early, and

went round by the No Thoroughfare. When she knocked where her schoolmate had disappeared the girl herself open the door.

"I was passing and stopped to walk to school with you," said Jean cheerfully. "I don't like to walk alone."

"I'm not quite ready," hesitated the girl.

"Go right on, Ann," said a voice from within.

Jean turned about and was very much interested in some children across the street until Ann came forth.

"I saw you had trouble with No. 187," said Jean. "It is hard; but here I have it worked out for you, and I think I can explain it so that you will see it clearly. Mathematics is very easy to me, but I do have a terrible time with history and rhetoric."

"It is the mathematical part that hinders me," said Ann, "and I'm so sorry for it. It seems as if I must go right on, so that some time I may be able to teach. Mother tries so hard to keep me in school! Father is dead, and there are three quite small children, and I ought to get on to a point where I can earn my living and part of theirs."

"Of course you will—splendidly," cried Jean. "Here, let us sit down on this bench and I will be professor of mathematics. I always

did think Miss Bliss had a very blind way of explaining things. There's time before school to get at the root of this matter."

"Why, you've made it plain as daylight!" cried Ann a little later.

"I'll help you every day, if you need it," said Jean, "and you'll pay me back by showing me how to be interested in that painful history; won't you?"

At recess Jean invited Ann to share her lunch. "I've got quite a spread for to-day, and you just make that villain, Magna Charta, clear to me."

Only two or three days were needed to make these girls great friends; days of walking to school together and sharing lunch and lessons; days in which Jean persistently took the initiative with her shabby schoolmate. Jean learned that Ann's mother took in sewing and could make dresses, but was a stranger in the town, out of work, and almost in despair.

Then Jean's mother took a personal interest; visited Ann's mother, and asked her to make Eliza two dresses. And Eliza took a personal interest and asked Ann's little sister to spend Saturday with her, and gave her a lapful of toys.

Jean then boldly cut off her best bunch of sacred lilies and walked in with them to call

upon the pale sick lady, to whom she had continued to bow twice daily, and having made a little call and given the flowers she bravely told her story of personal interest and Ann's mother.

"Tell her to come here and fit me for a wrapper," said the lady; "you and I will go partners in this personal interest. And did you know you have been taking personal interest in me, and have done me real good?"

"Why," said Jean, "I only supposed personal interest was for poor folks."

"We're all poor in something," said the lady.

Ann triumphed over mathematics; she had a new gown and a cheery face. In March she told Jean that her mother had been obliged to hire an apprentice, she had so much work; and if all went on prosperously in the fall they could move to a nicer house and keep two or three assistants.

"And the girl mother hired is one I took personal interest in from seeing her in the grocer's store looking so worried. She has an old sick mother to take care of, and she is so happy to get work near her room."

"Why, our personal interest society has seven or eight members already," cried Jean: "all five at our house, and my sick lady, and you, and your mother!"

"Is that all?" asked Cicely.

"It is a nice story," said Ned, "but please tell us a real boys' story now, Miss Eunice."

"Yes, do. This is our last Sunday afternoon here," urged Ben; "perhaps the last any afternoon, for I heard papa and mamma speak of going home to-morrow."

"One more, please, Cousin Eunice," cried Robert, settling himself on a big buffalo robe.

"Very good," said Miss Eunice. "Here is a boys' story:

"A TEXT AT THE RIGHT TIME."

Each morning when Fred Allston left the breakfast table he went around to his mother's place to bid her good-by before he started for school. When he did so Mrs. Allston always handed him a card. The card had a verse of Scripture written upon it: a text for the day. Mrs. Allston required no promise that Fred would remember or act upon this verse, or even read it. Having been brought up in the habit of courtesy he always did read it and say, "Thank you, mother."

True, Fred sometimes looked at the verse in such haste that he forgot it by the time it was well in his pocket; or he read it and lost all memory of it in the crowding of daily lessons; perhaps he thought of it on the way to school

and determined to bear it in mind and practise it, and then—it slipped out of his head entirely. Sometimes it came into his thoughts again and again, gave him light in doubt, showed him his way in emergency, helped him to resist temptation, or endure trial manfully: the text in his pocket thus made good to him the parable of the sower and the seed.

When a text had been thus helpful Fred turned up the corner of the card. At night he put the day's card in a box. By the end of the year he had three hundred and sixty-five cards. Then he selected the ones with the bent corners and glued them in a scrap-book. The others his mother took back to distribute at the mission-school or tied them with a ribbon and dropped them into the home-missionary box of the church; or Fred put the nice square cards, so clearly written, into a fancy box and sent them to some "shut-in" for a New Year's greeting.

"Thank you, mother," said Fred this particular morning as he hastily read his card—"Co-workers together with God."

"Nothing for me in that, surely," he said to himself, as he took down his cap and slung his book-strap over his shoulder.

"Meant for preachers and such folks," he mused as he ran down the steps. "God does n't

need any help; he is able to do anything." This, as he rattled up the street. "My help would not be any good: I'm not enough for myself. Algebra gets the best of me, and 'Cæsar' floors me." Then he slid into his desk, and picking up his general history went to studying industriously.

"Say, Fred and Joe," said Noah Lee at the noon hour, "over across the field by the hedge is a woodchuck's hole. Old Pete Wing gave me some medicine to put on a crust and lay by the hole, and if you watch and keep quiet the woodchuck is sure to come out to the bait. Let's go try it."

"Don't want to catch him; do you?" said Fred.

"Thought I'd bring him here for Prof. North to talk about in the zoology class, and let him go back to-morrow; don't believe mother will let me keep him."

"He would n't be a nice pet," said Fred.

"Would n't enjoy himself shut up," added Joe.

Then the three ran across the field, found the hole, laid the bait, and sat down to await Mr. Woodchuck in perfect silence.

Some one came up the road.

Noah peeped through the hedge. "There's that big, slow Bill Burt clumping along, making

noise enough to scare everything within ten miles."

"He'll want to stop and talk," said Fred. "Queer fellow; always looks at you as if he was wishing for something."

"Keep quiet and he wont see us," said Joe.

Bill Burt came stolidly along; a thorn with low-growing branches was near the place where the boys were in hiding on the other side of the hedge. Between the thorn and the hedge was a little sheltered nook. Bill stepped into the green closet.

"Come to catch the woodchuck himself," said Noah in his own mind.

But no. Bill dropped his cap on the ground, threw himself down with his hands over his face, and made a low long moaning of unutterable misery. Sobs shook his burly, rough figure, and choked him. Here was a soul in agony, and the three boy watchers were awed.

Fred Allston was called "brave as a lion;" he was also soft-hearted as a woman. This is a fine combination, and perhaps those daily texts had much to do with it. He could not endure the sight of Bill's grief, so on his hands and knees he thrust his head through an open place in the hedge, and close to Bill's shoulder.

Bill heard the sound, felt some living thing near his hidden face and rashly concluded that

it was Mr. Kerr's Jersey calf, a little denizen of the field whom in his longing for "lovingness" Bill often petted. He reached out a tear-wet hand, saying, "So-o-o, calfy—so-o-o!"

This was too much for Noah and Joe, and they burst into a roar of laughter which brought Bill up straight with his face uncovered. That face, wet, swollen-eyed, again sobered all the boys.

"I say, Bill," cried Noah, "what's the matter? Has Mr. Wells discharged you?"

"No," gasped Bill. "I don't do things to be sent away for. Fred—I didn't know it was you—truly. I'm always doing something stupid, like—"

"Oh, never mind that," said Fred. "Just tell us what's wrong, Bill."

"It's my sister Sue. The doctor told me just now to tell mother if Sue couldn't go to the city hospital to have her leg treated she'd die or be crippled for life. It will break poor mother's heart! Sue is so good and sweet! She is all our comfort and—"

"Why don't you send her along, then, as the doctor says?" cried Joe.

"We haven't the money; and we have nothing good enough to sell—and poor folks like us can't borrow. I wish I could chop off my leg or arm and turn it into gold for little Sue!"

“Wish we could help you,” said Noah.

“Thanky for wishin’ it,” said Bill gratefully. Then he picked up his cap and trudged down the road.

The three boys forgot the woodchuck and looked blankly at each other. Fred turned clear round then, lest his mates should see a big tear running down his nose. Joe’s face was all in a pucker with his effort to rise above an exhibition of his sympathy. “Do n’t he feel awful though!” he mumbled.

“Did n’t know Bill was—that sort of fellow,” said Noah with a choke. “Kind of awful about his sister; ain’t it? I’ve got a dollar in my pocket. Wish I had just thrown it into his cap.”

“A dollar’s not much account, though I could have put a half with it. Come on, Fred; let’s go back. Queer about Bill. I thought he was a big, dull fellow; now he kind of seems like an angel, or like a saint in a picture-book. Say, boys, I b’lieve he was prayin’ as well as cryin’.”

They went slowly over the field towards the academy. Noah and Joe looked back. Fred had left them and gone another way.

Suddenly, as if written in fire on the air before him he had seen his verse, “Co-workers together with God,” and — had understood it.

When people went on God's errands of kindness to fellow beings they were co-workers with God!

He went home and found his mother giving the children their lunch in the dining-room. He told her the story.

"Mother, something must be done. Only think: to have his sister die for lack of a little help! Suppose it was our Grace!"

"We must see to it right away, Fred."

"It would need money to fit her out, and get her to the city and back, and some one would have to take her there. How much would it cost? I could take a paper around this afternoon; I could start with father and Uncle Tom," urged Fred eagerly.

"Ring for Sallie to come to the children, and we will go right to see Mrs. Burt, and then to Dr. Pike. The sooner we arrange the affair the better."

As Mrs. Allston and Fred came in sight of the Burts' home they saw Bill with Joe and Noah. Noah's arm was thrown over Bill's shoulder in friendly style and Joe seemed to be crowding something into his hand, holding his elbow and talking earnestly.

Through the partly-open door of the front room of the Burts' home they saw Sue lying asleep on a lounge. The room was neat, pleas-

ant, shaded, but poor. Beyond, on the back doorstep, sat Mrs. Burt, evidently crying. To her they went softly.

It was eight o'clock that night before Fred reached home. He shouted for his mother:

"I've had the best success! Got all the money the doctor said was needed and twenty dollars over; so Mrs. Burt can go down once and see her and have things nice for her when she gets back! Dr. Pike's wife went out to buy Sue's outfit, and Mr. Bragg, the tailor, sent for Bill and fitted him out in a full suit. Bill is to take Sue to the city, he knows how to lift and help her so well. Dr. Pike says he's just wonderful handy. Nurse Low is going too, to get her there all right. Day after to-morrow morning they'll start, and Dr. Pike says Sue'll come back cured! Mr. Wells, where Bill works, subscribed eight dollars; and when I told him—you know—he said Bill was the right sort of boy, and he'd promote him so he'd get two dollars more, and he'd pay for him in night school for a year!"

"This is splendid," said Mrs. Allston. "Sallie is keeping your supper and Noah Lee brought your books."

"I'll take the alarm clock and get up at five, for once, to study. Bill gets up at five every day. Mother, when I went to Burts' to tell them

all was settled, do you know Bill told me he had been praying and God had answered him! And then, oh, you don't know how I felt about my verse, 'Co-workers with God.' God had let me be his co-worker in answering Bill's prayer! Isn't it wonderful!"

"Yes, Fred, it is. And not only in such ways does God make us co-workers with him. Every one who plants and tends a seed, doing his duty so, helps God to feed the world. Every teacher faithful to his work helps God to mould the mind of a nation; each faithful teacher of a little Sunday-school class is a co-worker with God in saving souls. Whoever does a kindly deed, says a true word, or offers a hand to lift up the fallen, is working with God."

"That makes life solemn and fine—and worth living," said Fred.

"So it does," said his mother.

After this story the children went downstairs, and with Mrs. Ainslie and Mrs. Lyman strolled about in the gardens until tea-time. After tea Mr. White said that he should leave in the morning, and for his last evening he had found in one of his bags a story written by a friend of his; which story, though printed, had probably never come to the notice of any of the circle at Madame Baron's.

"It is a short story," said Mr. White.

"We shall all thank you for it," said Madame, "and after it is told I wish all these children to disperse to their beds; for they have had a long busy day—and listening so much is really hard work."

"Our last story," sighed Cicely, as they took their places.

"It is named," said Mr. White,

"HARRY'S AUNT HARRIET."

MR. GRAY laid a letter upon the breakfast table. "Sister Harriet is coming for a visit." His tone was not hilarious. Mrs. Gray glanced at him blankly.

"Oh," said Caroline, with a falling inflection.

"Ah," said Grace, with a sighing sound.

"Now we will have fun," said John Frederick, eldest hope of the Grays.

"Good!" cried Harry, youngest scion of the house. "I do like company!"

"When it's nice," suggested John Frederick.

"Of course; it's always nice; and kin-folks are nicest of all," replied Harry.

"You don't know Aunt Harriet," said Grace, lugubriously, "for all she named you: said you were her namesake."

"Then I owe her something for that. It was good of her to take enough interest in me and I

like my name besides ; that is because you all speak it so kindly to me," he added, with a grateful glance around the table. "Now I shall have a chance to get acquainted."

"She was here when you were four, and she could n't bear you," said Caroline.

"You upset a glass of water at table over her best gown ; you trod on her favorite foot ; you knocked a bottle of ink over her new book ; you woke her up from her afternoon nap, and finally she said you were detestable, and so went away and has not come back since." Thus spoke John Frederick.

"Dear me ! Did I do all those disagreeable things ? No wonder she called me detestable. It took the goodness of you folks to like a youngster who behaved that way. Now I'm older I must get back into her good graces. So glad you told me all I had to make up, John Frederick !"

Through the open window came the clang of the high-school bell.

"Oh, I did n't think it was so late ! I have only had four muffins. Please excuse me, mamma ! Father, when you answer Aunt Harriet's letter tell her to come as soon as she can ; that I am much nicer than I used to be."

A shout of laughter from his seniors followed the closing of the door behind Harry.

“I do n’t see how a boy nearly fifteen can be so entirely confiding and innocent,” said John Frederick, assuming a world-worn air.

“He ’ll get over it fast enough,” said Caroline.

“Wont Aunt Harriet open his eyes!” cried Grace.

Then Mr. Gray, who never spoke hastily, unclosed his lips with authority. “It is true that your Aunt Harriet has a very difficult disposition; she is hard to get on with. All the more needful, then, for you children to watch yourselves and treat her with scrupulous attention. We are to remember that she is my eldest sister and took much faithful care of me in my childhood days. Also, we do not know what private sorrows have warped her temper. One thing I wish you to be careful about: do not in any way arouse suspicion in Harry nor give him any unpleasant impressions concerning Harriet. Let her come here to find at least one heart strongly in her favor. Harry may be a blessing to her.”

“His loving, trustful, frank nature is beautiful, I think,” said Mrs. Gray.

“Yes,” said Caroline. “I never look at Harry’s honest, kind eyes without wondering why I could n’t have his disposition.”

“He’s that way,” said John Frederick, “be-

cause we have all spoiled and petted him so much. The world will take it out of him."

"He is one of the kind that makes it easy to be good when he is around," said Grace; "he seems unconsciously to create a clean sweet moral atmosphere."

Harry was the one to go with his mother to the station to meet Aunt Harriet. Mrs. Gray, seated in the surrey, pointed her out, and Harry dashed to meet her.

"Here I am, Aunt Harriet! Perhaps you don't know me, but I'm Harry. I know you are tired, the day is so warm. Let me put you into the surrey."

He took bag and shawl-strap in one hand gave his aunt his arm proudly, and escorted her to the surrey.

"Here she is at last!" he cried, as if announcing one long-wished-for. "That your check, aunt? I'll see to your trunk. Are you quite comfortable? Sure you left nothing in the cars?"

"I don't go strewing my belongings about the country like some folks," said Aunt Harriet. But Harry had picked her check from between her fingers and was gone.

"Of course he'll lose the check, or get the wrong trunk," said Miss Harriet.

"Harry is very careful," said his mother.

“No boy of that age is careful; they are as wild as hawks, and expect grown folks to leave their things round in cars!” sniffed Miss Harriet, bobbing her head here and there to look for Harry. “Louisa, are you sitting on my umbrella? Will you look under the seat for it? Where is my umbrella?”

“Harry is bringing it,” said Mrs. Gray.

“Your check is all right. Bent will have the trunk at the house in no time. Here is your umbrella, aunt. A gentleman gave it to me. You left it in the cars, but he saw me meet you. It seems you are one of the folks people know and remember. Probably it is because you are so straight. Father is always reminding me to be straight. I must copy from you. Mamma, give me the reins, and we will be home in no time. I am sure Aunt Harriet wants to wash off the car dust.”

“Don’t go so fast,” cried his aunt; “I know that horse is running away! Boys ought n’t to drive!”

Harry immediately, without expostulation, slackened speed. He was one of those well-constituted people who are willing to let other folks be comfortable in their own way.

Finally Aunt Harriet and her trunk were safely in her own room. Harry had carried up umbrella, strap, bag. Half an hour later he

knocked at the door. Aunt Harriet opened it. What did he want now?

“I brought you a bouquet, aunt. I know you love these clove pinks. See what beauties they are; and the little vase—do you know it? It belonged to your mother.”

It was one of Aunt Harriet's ways to say that she hated flowers, they only made litter where they were around. She could not say that with Harry, eager and happy, holding out the fragrant cluster of pink, scarlet, white, yellow. And then her mother's vase!

“Yes, I know that vase. I ought to have had that. It was my mother's!”

“Father gave it to me, so I could have a souvenir of grandma, though I never saw her. But of course you have the best right, aunt, and I shall be glad to give it to you. You will tell me all about grandma; won't you? Women remember so much better than men; don't they? Are you real comfortable? Is there anything I can get you? You will come down when you feel like it? John Frederick told me how wretchedly I acted when you were here before; now I must do my best to make up for it.

Aunt Harriet found herself surrounded with gracious little attentions—a flower laid at her plate; the easiest chair always ready; a stool pushed to her feet; if she rose to leave the room

Harry opened the door. "Are you looking for your handkerchief, aunt? Let me run up to your room for one." "Warm after your ride, are n't you? Here, I can fan both of us," and Harry sat on the arm of her chair and fanned.

Harry honestly liked to hear old-time tales, and he listened to them intently. He told Aunt Harriet all about his plans, his lessons, his school adventures and school friends. He was entirely sure that she took an interest in all these things. He had a happy faculty for seeing the right side of everything, and, like charity, he "thought no evil."

"I think you must be, in a way, like Tom West's grandfather," he said. "He is very witty, and says jokes so gravely that they almost sound in earnest only that you know they could not be earnest. Now you are like that. I can hardly see at first that you are joking, you are so grave about it, and then I know that you must be; and it is a splendid way to set people right and make them see clearly. When you said all that about ministers not needing a vacation more than ditch-diggers, and being lazy, and having easy work, you sounded quite earnest, but of course I saw that it was only to let folks see how hard and mean all that talk is; for ministers' work is very taxing on their minds and nerves and feelings, and they never have real free days,

with care off, as people who live by digging." Miss Gray looked sharply at her nephew to see if he was in earnest. He surely was.

"Read me this letter, Harry. My glasses are at the jeweller's," said Aunt Harriet. The letter was from a man on whose house Miss Gray held a mortgage. Such a sad letter! Harry's voice faltered over it: wife just recovering from a long illness, a child dead, no money ready to pay the mortgage or even the interest; but how could he give up his home? Would she be merciful, and wait a little?

"What does the man take me for!" cried Miss Gray with heat. To foreclose that mortgage had been her long desire.

"So I say," said Harry. "He writes just as if you were a heathen! "Does he think, aunt, that when God has made you so well off you would drive him from his home for a little debt? But, poor man, no doubt he has found the world so hard he thinks you are like the rest, and forgets that you are a Christian. Shall I run for your glasses, or shall I write the letter for you to tell him not to worry; that you will wait?"

"You can write," said Aunt Harriet, to her own intense astonishment. But somehow she could not be other than this boy believed her to be.

"Oh, aunt! Are you the only one at home?"

All right; no one could be better. I am in such a way for some money!"

"Want to throw it away on a tennis or baseball outfit?" demanded his aunt.

"No, aunt, it is about a boy in Sunday-school class with me. I saw him down town nearly heart-broken. His father has been in hospital ever so long, and there are five of them—and the mother couldn't pay the rent, and the landlord is going to turn her out and take her sewing-machine. You'll let me have money, dear Aunt Harriet. You are so kind you will give me the money for them."

Miss Harriet had money in her lap. She had a folded bill between her thumb and finger. At her nephew's demand she flourished out her hand saying, "I never refuse to give."

"There, I just knew you would not refuse," cried Harry, laying hold of the bill. "Oh, how good you are! I'll tell you all about it when I get back."

He was off like the wind. Aunt Harriet was too dazed to cry out. She had begun to say,

"I never refuse to give my share to regular church work, but I never give to promiscuous objects."

And Harry was gone with the money! She mechanically went on folding the bills. What was that bill Harry had? A two, she thought.

No. Could it be possible it was a big twenty? That was highway robbery!

It was nearly three hours before Harry returned, and the family were at home. Harry rushed in jubilant, flung himself on the carpet at his aunt's feet and cried out, "You are the best woman that ever was—except my mother! How happy you made me! Oh but I'm tired! I'll tell you about it. Poor Mrs. Bond says you must be a perfect angel; she never knew of anyone in her life so good and generous! I supposed it was about a five, or maybe less, and there you gave me a whole twenty! I jumped for joy! We paid the rent, and got some coal and flour and vegetables, and she had a little over; and she just cried and called down blessings on you. Aunt, she is so grateful to you! If you would go to visit her I know you could tell her how to get on better. She doesn't know quite how, I think."

"What's that?" said John Frederick. "Has Harry been roping you into some of his charities?"

"A mere trifle," said Aunt Harriet stiffly. Not for worlds would she admit that this was all a mistake. She could afford to lose twenty dollars but not to bend her pride. To lose? Here was Harry sweetly adding,

"Won't you sleep well to-night! I think

your text for the day, aunt, must have been, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren ye did it unto Me.'"

"What kind of witchcraft has Harry used to mollify Aunt Harriet?" said Grace, a few weeks later. "She is another woman."

"It is his loving way, his honest faith in her, that has done it," said Mrs. Gray. "He has believed in her better nature until he has brought it to the surface and is keeping it there, for 'charity covereth a multitude of sins.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER THE FLOOD.

—“ The higher Nilus swells
The more it promises ; as it ebbs, the seedsman
Upon the slime and ooze scatters his grain,
And shortly comes the harvest.”

THE guests at Madame Baron's had all dispersed. The river had fallen to its proper bed. Not only so, but the droughts of summer had come and the river had shrunken and shrunken, and the snags and sand bars had appeared, and river travel and commerce had stopped for weeks.

Robert's parents had come back from Europe, and Robert had been at home with them for ten months. At last it was fifteen months after the “ Great Flood ” and Robert was back to spend a vacation with his grandmother.

There was so much to see and hear and tell !

At grandmamma's there was such a pleasant girl named Charlotte ; a useful, contented-looking, sweet-faced girl, with something in her eyes and about her mouth which suggested that she had known sorrow. Finally it dawned upon Robert that this was the Charlotte G—— of Mrs.

Lyman's journal. He privately asked Madame Baron.

"Yes; and she is very happy here."

"Do you like her?" asked Robert.

"I love her, indeed," said Madame.

Charlotte proposed one afternoon to drive over to see Mrs. Lyman and take Robert with her. At Mrs. Lyman's there was a very pretty, merry, beloved little maiden, three years old. She called Cicely "sister," and Mrs. Lyman "mother."

"This is the little flood baby, Robert," said Mrs. Lyman. "The one I adopted because all her family was drowned."

"She is a little dear, and we are so glad of her," said Cicely, "and mother says she is making me less selfish than I used to be."

"Perhaps my folks ought to adopt five or six to keep me from being selfish," said Robert. "I hate selfishness, but I know I am falling into it."

"Not much, I am sure," said Charlotte G——.

One day Ezra took Robert out with him in the spring wagon when he went over to Mr. Slocum's place on some business. Robert came back full of excitement, and rushed to his grandmother as if she had never heard any neighborhood news since he left.

"Grandma! Mr. Slocum's house is built; real

nice: picket fence, white paint, blinds, flower-beds in front, and two seats under the trees. Grandma, Sardinia is there, Sardinia Bowker, that sold her pigs, you know! She married Mr. Slocum, don't you think! She has a whole pen full of pigs—and she has lambs, and calves, and chickens, and all sorts of things—and her sister Lucy, or some such name, stays with her. I guess Sardinia is having a real nice time. She looks smiley in the eyes. And her mother was over there, in a buggy, and she looks real smiley too.”

On another day another of the threads of the past was gathered up. Letters came from Mrs. Ainslie, with one from Alec for Robert.

Alec told much of his happy town home in old Edinburgh; much of the great goodness of Mrs. Ainslie and all her friends to him; much of his studies, and how after a while he would be in college, and “by and by a minister, please God, as my mother's father was before me.”

“Dear me, grandma,” said Robert, “a great many good things came out of that flood, as well as a great many destructive things; did n't they! They make me think of how in Egypt they cast seed out on the flood, and it comes up food after many days.”

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