

THE RECTORS VISITS, OR, STORIES ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

CHAPTER VII. "Lead us not into temptation."

As I had fully expected, Mary's endeavour to perform her duty was rewarded by greater happiness than she had known since the death of her child, and the necessity for exertion whilst Martha Harvey remained under her charge prevented her from dwelling, as she had formerly done, upon her own great afflictions.

Mary's health, which was never good, had been much injured by suffering; and though no complaint escaped her lips, yet her pale cheeks and wasted form showed most plainly to herself and to all who knew her, that her days were indeed numbered.

It was during one of these seasons of amendment, when I was paying a visit to Mary's cottage, and listening with a mixed feeling of pleasure and pain to her hopes of his having become at last a different character, that we heard a loud and rather rough knock at the door, and in an instant Charles entered the room.

"What was the promise?" I said; and at the sound of my voice the young man started, and looking half ashamed, begged my pardon for not having noticed me before.

"I had not intended to go to the ale-house with my bad companions, but when I reached it, no one was to be seen. I tried another direction, but still unsuccessfully; and at last, sorrowful and disappointed, I returned to Mary's cottage with but a faint hope of finding him within; for a feeble resolution made in his own strength, at the sight of a woman's tears, was not for a moment to be depended on.

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and have, no doubt, placed themselves under the protection of God, and prayed not to be led into temptation, I have no fear of them; but for you, Charles, I do indeed tremble."

"I am not going to the ale-house," he answered, putting on a look of settled determination to have his own way, which gave me but little hope.

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So the men were marched back into the park, and Sir John kept them amused the best part of an hour, going through some of their manoeuvres, and then wheeled them up suddenly round the trees in front of the hall, where Lady Talbot and her daughters were standing ready to receive them; and two long tables were spread under the shade of the oak-trees, loaded with substantial viands.

It was Sir John's tardiness that happened to be pretty well supplied, for seldom did forty stouter or hungrier fellows sit down to a repast. As soon as it was over, and knives and forks had ceased to clatter, Sir John rose, and, as in duty bound, proposed the health of the Queen, which was drunk with every expression of cordiality.

"You are over-modest, Hartley," replied Sir John; "say what you please, the thing was boldly attempted, and well executed, and does you both great credit."

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