

THE BROWN SHAWL.

The funeral was over, the last kindly neighbor had gone, and one of the daughters began slowly to open the western blinds. The low afternoon sunlight, shining through the branches of the maple at the window, fell in its familiar path across the floor. The old dog on the threshold, bearing steps, looked up, and thumped a lazy greeting. From an apple tree near by a robin began to sing.

"I can't believe she's gone!" some one said in a choking voice. "It seems as if she must come in just shining with joy at having us all here. How she used to go out to the gate and watch when she knew any one was coming."

"She used to wear a little brown shoulder-shawl," a daughter-in-law added, softly. "The first time I ever saw mother she was standing at the gate with that shawl over her head. I saw it hanging in the back passage yesterday."

"It's there now," said one of the daughters.

The daughter-in-law looked up, her eyes full of tears.

"I am going to ask you something. If I am asking too much, you must tell me. I never had any 'mothering' in my life till she gave it to me. That first summer I came here, shy and frightened, and dreading it all 'expressly, then mother put her arms around me, and I knew that I had come home. As long as I live I shall never forget what that summer taught me of the power of a loving heart. People were always coming here upon every sort of errand."

"I've seen that brown shawl flung on before daylight, when some neighbor needed her; I've seen it go out to the barn half a dozen times in the night when old Rover was sick; I've seen it at the gate a hundred times when she ran out to get her meat of the butcher, or to give fresh cookies to some child, or send something up the road or down the road, or inquire for somebody to give directions to somebody else."

"If you would only let me have that shawl to hang always in my house! I think perhaps I want it to run to when things go wrong and I feel cross. I want it to help me to teach my little girl to be a good woman. Am I asking too much?"

The daughters looked at each other. They were much older, and the young city sister-in-law had always seemed different to them, but now—

Rachel silently rose and left the room, and when she returned the little worn brown shawl was in her hands. She touched its faded folds tenderly as she gave it to the young sister-in-law.

"Mother would be glad," she said.—Ex.

FAMILY PRAYERS.

A number of years ago, when the custom of holding family prayers was more common in American families than it is to-day, a certain Mr. Winthrop, a man of sturdy Christian principles, took his family to Europe for a summer of pleasure.

There were in the family, besides the father and mother, several young sons and daughters, all of an age to appreciate and enjoy their first visit to the Old World. They were energetic young people, eager to see, and the summer days were all too short for them. Moreover, to their dismay, their father insisted upon having family prayers every morning in Europe, just as he had been accustomed to have them in America.

The girls were embarrassed. No other travellers whom they had met had family prayers. They wished their father was like other people.

The boys grumbled about the loss of time when there were so many things to do. But obedience was a habit in the family, and not once during that delightful and long-remembered summer did a single member of the family absent himself from prayers.

In Paris they had a private sitting-room, into which their bedrooms opened, and the girls were made uncomfortable by the fact that one other person—a woman, whose name they did not know, and whom they had not met—shared the privilege of the sitting-room with them. What if she should open the door some morning and come in

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upon the kneeling family? How mortified we should be!" said the girls. But the woman never opened the door in that embarrassing moment, nor, indeed, at any other time while the family was present, although they remained three weeks in Paris.

Half a dozen years later the eldest daughter was at "tea" in New York, when a woman whose face was unfamiliar came up to her and said:

"If I am not mistaken, this is Miss Winthrop."

"Yes," answered the girl, and added: "but your father once saved me from making a great mistake in my life, and I have always hoped that I might some day see him and thank him. Will you thank him for me?"

"Ye-es, willingly," assented the girl, and waited for further enlightenment.

"I was in Paris," the woman continued. "I was all alone and in great trouble; I had no one with whom to consult, and I was in desperate need of help. A little more—a step or two—and I should have ruined my life. Every morning your father prayed in the sitting-room. He prayed for the stranger far away from home, for the tempted ones for the lonely ones—he prayed for me. And his prayers gave me strength to resist temptation. Your father saved my life."

"You were the lady who shared the sitting-room with us!" gasped the girl. "And we were always so afraid you would come in and find us there on our knees!"

"I, too, was on my knees," the woman answered, "on my knees behind the closet door."—Youth's Companion.

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