

The Reapers.

WHEN the tired reapers with fragrant sheaves,

Come out of the corn, as the sun goes down,

And the sky is rich as the falling leaves
In crimson and purple and golden brown,
I sit in the mellow and marvellous eyes
And watch, as the loom of the sunset weaves

Its cloth of gold over country and town.

And I think how the summers have come and gone

Since we saw the shuttle across the blue
That wove the colours of dusk and dawn

When the musk of sleeping roses flew
On the wings of the south wind over the lawn,
And the evening shadows were longer drawn,
And the sun was low, and the stars were few;

When Love was sweet in the lives we led
As the leaven that lives in the latter spring
To grow in the flowers, the books we read,
The romp and rush of the grape-vine swing,

In the words and work, to be filled and fed
On brooks of honey and wasted bread,
And sung in the songs that we used to sing.

And out of the shadows they come to me,
As flowers of the spring come, year by year,

The lovers we had when to love was free,
The stars were few and the skies were clear,

And we knew it was happiness just to be,
Through the sheaves of the cloud-land fair to see,

While the weary reapers are drawing near.

Though the red and white roses have lost their leaves

In the ashes of summers of long ago,
They come, through the mellow and marvellous eyes,

With the harvest of love that we used to sow,

As rich as the garlands the sunset weaves
When the tired reapers with fragrant sheaves

Come out of the corn and the sun is low.
WILL W. HARNEY.

NO!

BY ROSE TERRY COOKE.

CHAPTER IX.**THE TURNING OF THE WAY.**

JACK returned to his Bible study and his Sunday employments with a listless heart. He knew he was not as clean of soul as he had been. Though he had not done anything to disturb a spirit like Lewis Denning's, he had an educated conscience, which was as sensitive to anything wrong as an educated ear is to bad grammar or mispronounced words.

He began to wish earnestly for some new help within him, some fresh impulse toward a noble and manly living, but was depressed by this very need. There was at this time some interest in religion more than was ordinarily manifested in the church he attended; no excitement or great fervour, but the evening meetings were gradually filled, the congregation more crowded on Sundays, and more earnest in their attention. Gradually several young people whom Jack knew declared themselves on the Lord's side and professed their

faith publicly. He began to have a feeling of isolation creep over him; not that his friends were less cordial or kind than before, but he could not help feeling that they had new interests of which he was no part, new aims in life to which he did not aspire. He thought of his mother's faith in prayer, of her wisdom and goodness; he began to wish he were a Christian, but he did not know how to begin.

People of greater age often find themselves in just Jack's position. The preaching they hear is convincing, they even feel a desire to be converted to God, but when they hear from the pulpit repeated urging to "come to Christ," "believe in Jesus," "have faith," they don't know how to. This seems perhaps impossible to those who have served the Lord for so long that they have forgotten their alienated days, and wonder why every one cannot understand the simplicity of entrance into the kingdom; yet it is a fact that many a seeking heart is delayed if not daunted by this misunderstanding. They think if Christ stood visibly at their doors how gladly they would let him in to share their homes and hearts; they cannot understand that to close their eyes wherever they are, and say honestly, "Lord, save or I perish!" is opening the door, is believing on him to salvation.

One evening a clergyman from another church, of another denomination, came to the church where Jack had fixed himself, to preach for Mr. Craik, who had a cold.

The text was, "While I was musing the fire burned." The preacher was thin, sallow, angular, with a broad, full forehead, and deep-set eyes with the flash of a diamond when they kindled. His gestures were very awkward, his voice nasal and harsh, but he had not preached five minutes before every ear was held, every eye arrested, every mind following with eager attention the sermon that had in it such deep earnestness, such wonderful knowledge of the human heart. The rough voice softened into persuasive tenderness, the deep eyes glowed, the dark, sallow face was lit with the divine expression of one who pleaded with dying men for eternal life. Yet it was not an emotional or an exciting sermon; its theme was the necessity of giving personal attention to anything one wished to accomplish, fixing their thoughts voluntarily and persistently on the end they wished to attain, whether it were worldly gain, intellectual advancement, or spiritual blessing. He ended by advising any of his hearers who really thought that it was needful or desirable for them to become Christians to go home and write down on a paper these words:

"I promise from this day forth to give my earnest attention to the subject of religion."

Jack did not feel that he had made much progress in knowledge after hearing this sermon. He still wished that the way was plainer; but at least here

was something to do, and the old hymn with which the service closed seemed to him the very voice of his own soul—

"O that I knew the secret place
Where I might find my God!
I'd spread my wants before his face
And tell my woes abroad."

A little tired, a little dispirited, but firm in purpose, Jack went home to his lonely room and wrote the words on the fly-leaf of his Bible that pledged him to do all he could toward seeking and finding the way to God.

A strange quiet and peace stole over him after he had set his name to the promise. He did not know it, but his soul had in that act turned heavenward and changed his attitude. His conversion, the "turning toward," which the word means, had begun. He asked God to help him to attend to the things of his peace as humbly and simply as a child might.

From that hour the world had a changed aspect to Jack. His Bible was full of new and precious words; the meetings of the church, which he now sedulously attended, interested him deeply; he sung hymns to himself in an undertone as he dressed in the morning, and his own daily prayer seemed to bear him upward to the very feet of a Father. It was not altogether an intelligent or a logical state of feeling, it was the warm mist and the tender rain that greet and forward the germination of every seed in that spring which is symbolized in nature and realized in the soul; the springing blade was blindly making its way from dust and darkness into the light and air. It would have to endure all the evil accidents and tempests of a long season before its full ears should be ripe for the harvest; but now it was the glad beginning, the new life in its first newness.

It was a day of solemn and thankful happiness to Manice when her boy wrote to her that he had found the Lord, that her prayers were answered.

The letter she wrote back to Jack was too sacred to reveal here. He kept it as a saint of old treasured his most holy relic, hidden from sight, only to be gazed at to quicken devotion or strengthen endeavour.

When Jack was nineteen Aunt Maria died very suddenly. The loss was not great to any one, not even to her sister; nobody can mourn for a peevish, selfish, loveless man or woman. There are parents whose children cannot regret them; married men and women who know that the death of a husband or wife will be a welcome release to the living. Here is one of the ways wherein the sting of death is sin, for, with that awful enlightening of the soul death sometimes brings, what a pang must be added to natural terror by the thought that we shall cause joy instead of grief by our departure!

Jack was not able to go home to the funeral, but his mother wrote him that Aunt Sally was very feeble. She missed the sister she could not mourn.

The habit of her life was broken up, and her physician told Mrs. Boyd that her aunt could scarcely live through another winter.

"Well," said Mimy, with pungent comment, "I'd rather wear out than rust out. She's dead an' gone, poor old creatur'! But my! her room's better'n her company; just think o' that! She hasn't toiled nor spun, as Scriptor' says, but then there hasn't been no glorious clothing to her, for all. Miss Sally, now, she's done a lot o' things for poor folks. There'll be cold feet and hungry stomachs thinkin' about her when she's gone; she's done what she could, any way, if she wasn't so terrible lively as some."

It would have been a loss to Manice in a pecuniary sense to lose these two boarders, if Alice had not been for the last year teaching in the Danvers graded school and Anne keeping books in a dry goods store.

Their help and Jack's made life easy for the dear mother, whose dark hair was now mingled with silver very visibly, and who felt the weight of her years more than ever.

She had before long to write again to Jack, for Aunt Sally grew feeble much more rapidly than the doctor had predicted. In two months from her sister's death she slept her life away one autumn night.

"Dear Jack," wrote Manice, "Aunt Sally has gone from us suddenly, at the last, yet not without warning. She has been very patient for the last few months, and quite silent. This morning I found her asleep, her hand under her cheek like a tired child, but asleep forever.

"Mimy has spoken her best epitaph, 'She's done what she could.' May we all of us deserve that record as truly! I wish you could come down. Your Uncle John is in great trouble. Aunt Hannah cannot live but a few days, and they are very poor. I am afraid Will does not help them much. He invests his salary as fast as he saves it, and seems to be fast growing, like his employer, to consider money the one good of life. Poor Uncle John is very dispirited. I think it would do him good to see you. Come if you can.

"Your very loving MOTHER."

Manice had told but little of the real facts of this case. Mr. John Boyd had felt the sharpness of Will's conduct to his very heart. He was not in want of mere food and fire, but the little luxuries that are so necessary to severe illness he could not procure for his dying wife, and Will never offered to provide them. Even when his father appealed to him to lend him a little money for this purpose, Will declared he had not a cent to spare.

"I've invested every dollar, and I've got now to pay assessments on some real estate that will take up all my half year's saving when pay-day comes. But I wouldn't spend money for such things any way; they're useless luxuries, as Mr. Gilbert says, and they can't help her any."