

Our Story.

BARBARA STREET.

A FAMILY STORY OF TO-DAY. BY THE AUTHOR OF "OUR NELL," "A SAILOR'S DAUGHTER," ETC.

CHAPTER XI.—Continued.

But now he told himself he had got to the second verse of that lovely poem, if not to the third. But now the young delinquent, perched on his chair, was being hoisted over the wall by Grace, and, finally, was deposited on the gravel on the Barbara Street side. He was a little boy of about eight—the biggest and most riotous of the lot—a sturdy and bold rogue when he was on his own premises. But, finding himself on alien ground, and in the hands of the enemy, his spirit failed him, and he put his fists to his eyes, and began to blubber. He was very much afraid of Grace, and of what she might do to him, and had delivered himself up into her hands through a species of horrible fascination. Grace stood and looked at him, and the pause seemed, in his little consciousness, to herald some terrible punishment. He stopped crying, and stared too.

"Hester," cried Grace, who saw her sister at the back-door, "come and look at the boy who throws the stones."

Hester came up the gravel, and stood at a little distance.

"What do you think should be done to him?" said Grace.

"He is very dirty," said Hester, in a tone of disgust.

"He is extremely dirty," said Grace. "I mean to wash him."

She said this in so awful a tone, at the same time fixing her great dark eyes upon the urchin, that he felt all his worst anticipations fulfilled, and again he lifted up his voice and wept. Grace took him by the arm, and led him toward the house.

"Grace," exclaimed Hester, in a remonstrant tone, "you are not going to take him indoors!"

"Yes I am," said Grace, decidedly; and then they all disappeared, much to the disgust of Waterhouse, who wished to see the little drama played out. Had he been able to do so, he would have seen Grace conduct the culprit into the kitchen, and when there lift him on the table. This isolated and conspicuous position struck further dismay to his soul, and it appeared to him growingly likely that he would never regain his freedom any more. His captor having procured soap and hot water, proceeded in a determined manner to scrub his little black face and hands, heedless of the soap which got into his eyes, and nearly blinded him, and then with a coarse towel to rub him till she nearly took off his small snub nose.

"How can you touch him, Grace?" asked Hester, who stood looking on.

"Yes, indeed, Miss Ester, so say I," interrupted Sarah; "I wouldn't lay hands on the ragamuffin, not if you was to pay me for it."

Hester moved aside laughingly; it did not suit her to find points of accord with Sarah. Grace took no notice of the criticism, but confined her attention to the matter in hand.

"I am not going to whip him *this* time," she said. "I consider washing enough, and I believe he will not throw stones any more; if he does—"

The threat ended in effective vagueness. When she had given the last polish to his cheeks, she surveyed him with attention.

"When I deliver him to his kinsmen you may depend upon it they will not own him, and he will be turned back on my hands. The Bishop can change his skin. I have settled that question. Now," she continued, "we must temper judgment with mercy. Sarah, fetch me that piece of cold pudding from the larder. What is your name, little boy?"

"Jimmy!" answered the youth, promptly, seeing a break in the clouds.

"Well, then, Jimmy, can you eat cold pudding?"

"Yes!"

"Can you eat all that?"

"Yes!"

"Then you are a very good boy, a very good boy. A good child is one who eats cold pudding. Now, then, I am going to put you over the wall again; and if ever you throw stones any more, you'll wish you had not done it, that's all."

"Poor little mortal!" she said, when she returned from her errand; "I should be throwing stones every minute of my life if I lived over there."

It was not many mornings after this ere Waterhouse again had the satisfaction of observing Grace in the garden when he went into the room to fetch something after breakfast. It was a real spring morning, though in the middle of March. After a mild winter, spring was coming on apace, and the air was balmy and as fresh as it could be in a London suburb. Grace this time bore in one hand a three-legged stool, and in the other a basin, and at her heels came Pan, jumping, and wriggling, and wagging his tail, and looking as though he must come to pieces in his joy. Waterhouse stood at his open window and watched her; as before, she mounted up to the wall and called over it, "Charlie!"

The lame boy came out of the house at the call.

"Come, Charlie, here is your soup; and I never tasted anything so nice in my life as it is this morning. Drink it up, and give me back the basin. What is the baby ill again? No, I'll fetch you some more for baby. What unlucky folks you are!"

Then Grace went back to the house to fill the basin again, and on her return there ensued a little conversation with the slatternly mother anent the baby's ailments, for which Grace appeared to be prescribing. The woman was evidently very civil to the young lady. These matters disposed of, Grace turned her attention to the garden bed, where she daily inspected the progress of some crocus and snowdrop plants of a dwindled and blossomless character. She stooped down hastily—yes, there it was, without mistake, a beautiful yellow flame! One of the crocus plants had blossomed! So often had Grace tasted failure, and so seldom success, that she could scarcely believe her eyes; the joy seemed too great, and she actually cried a little. Waterhouse saw her take out her handkerchief to wipe her eye—an opportunity which Pan seized to burrow his cold nose in her hand. It would have horrified her no little if she had known, for if Grace professed one thing more than another, it was entire freedom from sentiment. But Grace had a passion for flowers and the country—a passion which had never been gratified, and which she was scarcely conscious of, but which sometimes would surge up uncontrollably. Waterhouse did not exactly see what she was crying for, but he was very much moved by the sight, and

wished he could give her everything her heart could desire. Bye-and-by Grace went into the house, and returned with a hammer and nails, and the little white kitten, to which Pan immediately gave chase. It ran up the tree, and glared down at the barking enemy from a safe distance. Grace, having warned Pan away, and admonished him, again mounted the stool—this time in order to nail up a spray of ivy, which hung loose. When she had put in one or two nails, she stretched out suddenly to a point almost beyond her reach. The same moment the stool overturned, and she fell with it. For a moment Waterhouse stood fascinated; but when he saw her trying to rise, without further delay he rushed out of the room, and down-stairs. He made no pause at the bottom of the first flight, but went straight down to the next, through regions into which he had undoubtedly no business to penetrate, till he found himself in the open air. Grace was now standing, leaning against the wall, and looking down helplessly at one of her feet; her face was very white, and when she saw Mr. Waterhouse her smile was rather a pitiful one.

"Did you see me?" she said. "How very kind of you! I called Sarah, but she did not hear. I don't think it is anything; I can't have broken my leg."

Her feeling was not one of anger at the lodger's temerity; it was rather one of amusement, as she said to herself—

"He is the kind of man who always turns up when he can be useful."

Waterhouse stooped to examine the foot.

"I think you have sprained it," he said; "but I can't examine you here; I must help you in."

"Oh, I can walk alone," said Grace, eagerly.

"Try," said Waterhouse, with dryness.

Grace tried, but turned paler still. She bit her lip.

"I can't," she said, humiliated.

"I knew you couldn't," replied Waterhouse, as, without more ado, he took her in his arms, and carried her off, as though her weight was a mere feather.

"I suppose my foot got twisted under me as I fell," said Grace, on the way. "What awkwardness! I am horribly ashamed."

Waterhouse did not reply, being just then occupied with speculations of which Grace could not dream. Probably he would not have known for some time, under ordinary circumstances, that he was in love, so imperceptibly and gradually had that malady stolen upon him; but when, helpless and in pain, Grace submitted to be carried in his arms, such a rush of tenderness came over him, that it revealed to him a state of things within which was in no slight degree startling. The flash of consciousness came and passed; he had no time to reflect on it just then. He carried Grace into the parlour, and laid her on the sofa, where the others came around her with exclamations. Waterhouse looked at the foot, and felt it all round gently. He apparently took it as a matter of course that he should do the doctoring.

"You must take the stocking off," he said; "it will swell. I have got some rare ointment for sprains up-stairs, which they use out at the Diamond Fields. I do not think it will be much if it is seen after properly."

"It is nothing," said Grace, "only I am always so bad at bearing pain. I don't think I was made for it," she added, with a laugh.

Waterhouse went off to fetch the ointment. It would not have been an appropriate occasion for him to say that he did not think so either, and if he could prevent it she should have nothing to suffer as long as she lived, and that was all he felt inclined to say just then. When he got back again Hester had drawn off the stocking, and was gently chafing the small white foot, and Kitty was crying behind the sofa, having quite succumbed during the operation, which had exorted a groan or two from the patient. Hester went forward to take the ointment and dismiss Mr. Waterhouse, but Waterhouse did not intend to be dismissed. He came forward confidently.

"I can do what is necessary now, thank you," said Hester, feeling Waterhouse to be remarkably obtuse.

"Excuse me," said Waterhouse, "I must put this ointment on myself, and if you will get me some bandages I will bind it up. I am a sort of surgeon, you know—it is a part of my old experience out yonder—and this cannot be done by an unpractised hand. I have been properly trained to this kind of surgical assistance."

"You are very kind, I am sure," said Grace, accepting his services frankly, and Hester fell back and made no further protest.

"You cannot cook my dinner to-day," said Waterhouse, slyly, looking up from his doctoring, which was being done in cool and methodic professional style.

Grace's pale face flushed, and for a moment she lost her self-possession. How had Mr. Waterhouse learned that she cooked his dinners?

"I shall be able to walk to-morrow, I suppose?" she said, after a pause.

"I think, perhaps, you will be able to walk in a week, if we are very careful," Waterhouse replied. Grace bit her lip. What was to be done?

"You would not let me go without dinners, I suppose, even if fasting would suit my fancy, so I shall dine at the club till you are all right again—unless, by-the-bye, you would let me cook my own. Why not? And I'll cook yours too if you like."

Grace could not laugh. Between pain and vexation and a sense of Waterhouse's kindness the tears came into her eyes. Mrs. Norris spoke for her in terms of gentle apology and deprecation. Waterhouse, after a glance at Grace's face, cast about for means to create a diversion.

"Hallo, Kitty," he said; "I didn't see you. What are you doing behind the sofa? Come and hold the ointment, while I bind up this poor little foot."

Kitty came forward slowly, with a tear-stained face.

"Why, you silly little goose," said Grace, holding out her hand and smiling brightly.

"Don't you feel the better for those vicarious tears?" asked Waterhouse.

"Don't call names, Mr. Waterhouse; Kitty looks quite frightened at having such a hard word applied to her tears—poor little Miss Mustardseed."

"What does it mean?" asked Kitty, much comforted.

"Why does she call you Mustardseed—eh, Kitty? She has no right to scold me for calling names, has she?"

"Oh, it is a fairy in Shakespeare."

"Ah—yes."

"And Hester is Cobweb, and we call Grace Peasblossom, though she does not like it," volunteered Kitty, who breathed freely, not being able to perceive any black looks when the lodger called her Kitty.

"There I now the foot will do," said Waterhouse. "It is easier, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes," said Grace; "you have done it so firmly and gently. It is a luxury to sprain one's ankle if it is to be bound up like this."

Waterhouse laughed, and, in the midst of thanks, escaped. In a few minutes' time, however, his steps were heard coming down-stairs again, and he appeared, carrying some books. They were those Grace had rejected. He put them on the table by her side, and said, quietly—

"You will have time for these now."

Grace could not refuse to take them, but it was difficult to accept graciously, after her ungracious refusal the other day.

"Yes; I shall have only too much time," she said; "and it is good of you to wish to fill some of it profitably; but I assure you I have only a smattering of German."

"Perhaps they may amuse you," said Waterhouse, gravely; "at any rate, I will leave them;" and then he took his final departure.

CHAPTER XII.

HESTER WAKES KITTY.

"It appears we have given Mr. Waterhouse his inch," said Grace the next day, after Sarah had just brought in to the invalid some delicate hothouse flowers. And as the days passed, it appeared that Waterhouse intended to take even more than his ell; for not one went by without some fresh offering from the same source, of flowers or fruit or books; and not a day passed, also, that he did not appear personally to make inquiries after the foot, in which he may be considered as taking undue advantage of the fact that Grace could not escape from the dining-room sofa, which she managed to reach, with assistance, in the morning, and could not do other than answer, "Come in," however reluctantly, in answer to his tap at the door.

One morning, when Grace was alone, he brought with him his chess-board.

"Wouldn't it amuse you to have a game of chess?" he said.

"I am not worthy of your steel," replied Grace, being unable to think of no gracious method of refusal.

"That is of no consequence at all," said Waterhouse, opening the board; "if you are not a good player, I will give you something. But we had better play one game first, and then we can estimate the difference between us."

But by the time one game had been played, in which, after a comparatively short struggle, Mr. Waterhouse had won, Grace had made up her mind to say what would probably preclude a second.

"Good!" exclaimed Waterhouse. "You show the elements of a good player, but you have not had much practice. Shall we have another? You are not tired?"

Waterhouse moved his seat a little, in order to place the board in what he fancied would be a more convenient position for Grace. In doing so, he had to move away from his elbow a vase containing flowers, which he had that morning sent in for her.

"Let me have the flowers for a moment," she said. "I want to smell the mignonette."

Waterhouse, with a decidedly gratified expression on his face, handed them to her.

"I am very fond of flowers," she continued, sniffing the fragrance—Waterhouse smiled, well pleased—and yet I would rather you did not buy them for me."

"Why not?" asked Waterhouse, with a fallen countenance.

"Can't you see? That surprises me, for you are not dull of perception."

"Thank you; that is sheathing the claw in a velvet paw, like Pussy here."

Waterhouse spoke lightly, but he was in reality very apprehensive as to what she might be going to say.

"Can't you see," continued Grace, fixing serious eyes on the young man, "that it hurts the feelings of people who are very poor to be laden with presents every day from the hand of some one who is a stranger and—our lodger?" she added, after a pause.

Waterhouse was very seriously hurt and annoyed. He had thought that he had made some way—that he had overcome such foolish prejudices. After a hasty glance at Grace, he sat looking down and toying absently with the chessmen.

"And what about my obligations to you?" he asked at length, looking up. "Am I never to be allowed to do anything to discharge them? Is my pride not to be respected?"

"You seem to forget that my services are paid for," replied Grace, unable to restrain a smile.

"Paid for!" he repeated, starting up, and walking off to the hearthrug—the usual resort for a man out of temper—and Waterhouse was thoroughly angry now.

But Grace, with her most winning smile said—

"Come, now, Mr. Waterhouse, don't be angry. I do appreciate your kindness. I think you are kinder than any one I know, and I don't want to be ungrateful. But these things—why, they—they simply smother me!"

Perhaps Grace's speech was not quite calculated to soothe Waterhouse's feelings, but he could hardly show resentment after it. He said, with a smile—

"Well, you shall not be smothered any more," and taking up his chess-board, added, "You have had enough of me for to-day, I'm sure," and so took his departure.

Grace received no more presents, and though Waterhouse continued to pay his little visits, they became much more ceremonious ones. Grace had effected what she intended, but whether her feelings in consequence were those of unmitigated satisfaction, I ask any student of human nature to judge.

But it was not in Waterhouse to bear resentment long, and not many days had elapsed before he came in one morning with his old genial address. He held in his hand a bunch of violets.

"Miss Norris, will you take these from me?" he said, smiling; "they cost me one penny sterling; and if you like, you shall give me the penny."

"By all means," said Grace, saucily; and with eyes dancing with merriment, she banded Waterhouse a penny. He put it into his waistcoat pocket, saying—

"That is well. You can't feel yourself under a painful obligation now."

"I don't know," replied Grace. "I daresay you have been at a great deal of trouble to get them; but I accept that gratefully."

(To be continued.)

—What do you think would be the result if every member of the Church increased his subscription to the Mission Scheme.

Sabbath School Work.

LESSON HELPS.

SECOND QUARTER.

THE FIRST MIRACLE.

LESSON III, April 18th, John II, 1-11; memorize verses 1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."—John II, 11.

TIMER.—The latter part of February, or early March, A.D. 27. Three days after our last lesson.

PLACE.—Cana of Galilee, 6 or 8 miles north-west of Nazareth.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—In our last lesson we left Jesus just starting from Bethany (Bethabara), on his way to his home in Galilee. He had five or six disciples, and on the third day reached Cana, the home of Nathanael (Partholomew) where doubtless he stopped till he was invited to the wedding where we find him to-day.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. The third day: after leaving Bethabara (ii. 43). The mother of Jesus was there: from her familiar actions it is supposed she was a relative. 2. Jesus was called or invited: since his mother was there, and he himself would be a prominent guest in a village, Jesus went to the wedding feast, and thus sanctified the home, the wedding, and innocent social joys. And his disciples: Andrew, Peter, John, Philip, Nathanael, and probably James (see last lesson).

3. When they wanted wine: when the wine failed, perhaps on account of this increase in the number of guests. 4. Woman: Greek, lady, a term of respect. What have I to do with thee: i. e., I am no longer subject to your control as heretofore, but to my heavenly Father who henceforth tells me what to do. Mine hour is not yet come: the hour to show his divine nature, or the hour of his public manifestation as the Messiah. 5. His mother saith: implying that she had confidence that he would come to their help in some way. He did not refuse her request, but put it on the right basis of divine and not human commandment. 6. Six water-pots: stone jars, in the court or outer room. Purifying: As the Jews then ate not with spoons, or knives and forks, but with their fingers, these frequent washings were very necessary. Firkins: the Hebrew bath—about nine gallons. 8. Governor of the feast: the friend who had general charge. 10. When men have well drunk: or drunk freely, and their taste is dulled. It does not imply that any of this company were intoxicated, but is a proverbial statement. Good wine: of the best flavor, of peculiarly delicious aroma and taste. 11. Beginning of miracles: the first that Jesus ever did. Miracles: here, signs; wonders done as a sign of Christ's nature and truth. His glory: his true nature as the Son of God, his loving, helpful character, his goodness and power. His disciples believed: their faith began a few days before was now confirmed and settled.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Cana of Galilee.—Weddings among the Jews.—Lessons from Jesus' presence at a wedding (v. 4).—The stone water jars.—Lessons from this transformation.—Jesus' example as to wine.—His glory.

LEARN BY HEART, Eccl. xi, 9; John xv, 11; Rom. xii, 2.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did we leave Jesus in our last lesson? Where was he going? Who were with him? What year was this? At what time of the year? Trace the journey on the map?

SUBJECT: JESUS IN DAILY LIFE.

I. JESUS AT A WEDDING (v. 1).—How long was Jesus in reaching Cana? What disciple lived there? What social event was taking place at this time? Why was Jesus invited? Who went with him? Did Jesus by this sanction social pleasures? Is his religion opposed to innocent enjoyments? Does his presence with us increase the joy? Is any pleasure right in which we would not like his presence? Why did Jesus work his first miracle at a wedding? Was it a fitting beginning of his ministry? Are good homes the foundation of the state? Are they essential to the progress of religion?

II. JESUS SUPPLYING COMMON NEEDS (vs. 3-10).—What can you tell about Jewish customs at their weddings? What part of the entertainment failed? Why? What did the mother of Jesus suggest to him? What was his reply? Was this a reproof? Did his mother take this reply as a refusal? Was all this said in public or private? What was the purpose of the six water-jars? How much would they all hold? What was done with them? Into what was all this water changed? How was it proved? What kind of wine was it? Why did Jesus make such a great quantity of wine? Was it intoxicating wine? Did Jesus drink wine? Is that a sin in itself? In what respects were the wines then different from ours? In what respects were the circumstances different? Are their uses of grape juice which are healthful and right? Does such use endorse the use of intoxicating liquors? What reasons have you for believing that Jesus in our day would have been a total abstainer? How does v. 10 give a type of the world's giving and of Christ's giving? (Prov. xxiii, 31, 32; 2 Cor. iv, 17; Rev. xxi, 3.)

III. THE GLORY OF JESUS (v. 11).—Had Jesus done any miracles before this? What was Jesus' glory? How did this miracle manifest it? In what respects does Jesus transform our lives? (John iii, 3, 5; Rom. xii, 2; Phil. iii, 21; Isa. lv, 12, 13; lx, 17-20.) Had Jesus' disciples believed on him before? (John i, 41, 45.) How was their faith now confirmed?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

- I. Jesus exalts our daily life by his presence.
II. Any place of enjoyment where Jesus can go with us is safe for us.
III. Jesus confirms, blesses and ennobles the home.
IV. We should go to Jesus in our every need.
V. We should do not only the right thing, but at the right time.
VI. Jesus sympathizes with us in our joys as well as in our sorrows.
VII. Jesus has come to transform our hearts, our lives, the world.
VIII. Jesus by his wondrous works is ever confirming our faith.—Peloubet.

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