

laugh to-day, but somehow the attempt proved useless—the merry laugh would not come.

Gravely he removed the rings one by one from his fingers, and put them back on their stand; then he took the watch which lay in its case quite near, he put it to his ear to delight himself as usual with its ticking sound, but it had not been wound up, and in consequence was silent. He returned it also to its case, and recovering the dressing table, turned to the bed. He climbed up on the bed, and lay down on it, and drew the curtains about him.

Here, if he closed his eyes, he would surely be able to forget for a little time that his mother had gone away and left him; here, where she had so often put her arms round him, here, where he had slept on many nights so sweetly by her side; here, in her very own bed, he would forget that she had died, and the great, dreadful loneliness would for a time leave his heart.

He shut his eyes up very tight, and tried to believe that she was still close to him. The air of the song "Ruby" kept floating in his brain, and he wanted to imagine that she was singing to him.

Stop! he started up, what were those words his mother had said to him on that night here—a week ago? "I shall have a harp to sing to and shall stay close to God, and be happy."

That was why the air his mother so often sung kept floating before him. She was singing—she was near.

He lay down again with a smile of great content and rest on his face, and went to sleep.

All through his sleep he dreamed of his mother—he dreamed of her not as living with him here, but as living with God—there!

The dream was very vivid, and it comforted him greatly. He dreamed of her wearing the white dress she had told him ever to think of her in—standing close to God—and looking at him, and singing, oh! such beautiful words, to such beautiful, beautiful music.

Her singing down in the drawing room on earth—or to him when they sat together over the fire at night, was nothing, nothing at all to her singing now up in heaven.

He awoke with her last words on his lips.

"Be good, Miles, grow up good. Try for this."

Alas! no further did the boy's memory take him; he forgot the few other words that spoke of his weakness and God's strength.

"Yes," said Miles to himself in a confident tone, "I'll be good—I have made my resolve. I have promised."

He was like a little soldier putting on his armor.

CHAPTER IV.—THE BATTLE THAT IS NEVER DONE.

Miles had resolved to be good in the very hardest possible way. He had resolved to conquer the sin that most easily beset him.

As I said in the end of the last chapter, he had put on his armor—and he had put it on to do battle in

the hardest war any one can fight—he was going to fight against himself. For many reasons, too many to mention, this is a hard battle; for one reason, it is the hardest battle of all.

This battle is never done.

The child who thinks that he has conquered his evil desires, or bad tempers, or disobedient spirit, or selfish nature in one day, who thinks that this thing which so torments him is quite slain, will find that it is not so, that again the next day, perhaps the next hour, it will rise up strong and well, and that he must again overcome and slay it.

And so he must do, day after day, all through his life, for sin will never quite die within him, until he has gone to a world where sin cannot enter. He must fight always, and though by the help of God the sin daily overcome grows weaker and weaker, and victory over it more and more certain, yet the child who wants in the end to conquer, and to hear, as all such brave hearts do, the great "Well done" of the Master, must always wear armor, and must always be a soldier.

I have said that he must always wear armor. Yes; but if he wishes for victory, it might be the right sort. Miles now had clothed himself in armor but it was in the armor of his own resolve, in the proud strength of his own will.

Let us see how so attired he fared in the battle.

For a whole week this resolve which he was wearing like an armor about his heart was gathering strength within him; all during those long days when he had lain either curled up in the deep recess by the window, or when he lay with his face downwards on the hearth-rug, and people thought him either asleep or stupid, he was making his resolve—he would do the hardest thing he could do.

On the day of his mother's funeral he had made up his mind what this hard thing should be.

He was going to be obedient.

Disobedience was the fault his mother had most often blamed him for; disobedience was the sin he had been guilty of on the dreadful night she had been taken away from him.

From henceforth for the rest of his life he would obey; he would crush that stubborn little will of his into saying yes, when it longed to say no. He would do right when he longed to do wrong.

Hitherto Miles had found it very hard even to obey his mother, whom he so dearly loved; but his governess and his nurse he had always openly defied.

No threats, no punishments, could make him in the least afraid of either of them; no reasoning on his mother's part could make him quite see the use of yielding to their commands.

Now, whatever the nature of those commands, they should be obeyed. Wishing to make his resolve as certain and inviolable as possible, he even confided it to Polly, who, without in the least understanding either his motive or his feeling, would still, he knew, be a check on him, if ever such an unheard of thing arose as that he should wish to break it.

Poor little fellow! he did not quite know how hard was the battle before

him. If it was difficult to obey Miss Cecil or his nurse during his mother's lifetime, how much more difficult now! Then he only slept and had his meals in the nursery, and was with Miss Cecil but for three hours daily, during lesson time—his mother always devoting her mornings and part of her evenings to him; but now things were altogether altered, now he lived always in the nursery or school room.

His father was out all day; and though Miles could have gone down to dessert as in his mother's time, yet he never would summon up courage to enter the large gloomy dining room without her.

How intensely he missed the hour before the late dinner, when he sat by his mother's side, or on his mother's knee; when the other children, having all gone to bed, he had her quite to himself, and communed with her of each thought that passed through his active brain, and each feeling that actuated his warm young heart. She gave him advice without lecturing him, she corrected without scolding him, she showered upon him loving words, without making him feel like a baby.

They shared each other's interests, this mother and child; they both went into raptures over the gray pigeon's first egg; he gathered, and she kept for a week (putting it by and pressing it afterwards), the first rose that blossomed in his garden.

TO BE CONTINUED.

BE THOU MY HELPER.

By the Rev. Canon BURNING, Liverpool.
"I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."
Psalm cxxi. 1.

O for the light which cometh from above;
O for the zeal which springeth out of love;
O for the faith which teacheth how to live;
O for the peace which Christ alone can give;

O for the lips to sing the Saviour's praise;
O for the feet to walk in Wisdom's way;
O for the eyes to see where Jesus trod;
O for the hands to work the work of God.

O for the trust which sweetens every care;
O for the joy which brightens everywhere;
O for the life which lives in Christ alone;
O for the death made stingless by His own.

Father, bestow these blessings of Thy grace
For His dear sake who suffered in our place;
Ruined by sin before His cross we fall,
Nothing ourselves, and Jesus all in all.

DEATH.

TWINING.—Entered into rest, at Halifax, N.S., on 19th Dec. last, aged 46 years, Ellen Hargette, third daughter of the late Charles Twining, Esq., Q.C. of Halifax, N.S.

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