

Our Story.

BARBARA STREET.

A FAMILY STORY OF TO-DAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "OUR NELL," "A SAILOR'S DAUGHTER," ETC.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PRIVILEGES OF FRIENDSHIP.

"GRACE," said Hester, at last, "you are keeping me a long time in suspense. I cannot imagine what has distressed you so."

"I don't know what to do," said Grace, still in the same distracted tone. "I don't know whether to tell you or not, and yet I must tell you." She broke away from Hester, and walked across the room. "Oh, why were you here when I came in! I wish you would go away, Hester. I wanted to recover my self-control before I saw you. I am ashamed of acting so weakly. I thought myself stronger. But oh, I did not know what miseries there are in the world!" Grace uttered these sentences disjunctedly, as she wandered aimlessly to and fro, pressing her hands together. That Grace's anguish could be referred to her interview with Mr. Denston was, Hester told herself, impossible; yet there was a floating fear in her mind which she would be glad to have dispelled.

"Mr. Denston has not told you anything distressing, has he?" she asked.

Grace stopped dead as she was walking to the window, and did not reply. Hester began to feel rather faint. Had Mr. Denston told Grace that he was going to die?

"Tell me what it is, Grace," she said, quietly, but with a suppressed emotion in her voice, which brought a cold perspiration out upon Grace's forehead. She would rather have died at that moment than have had to tell this thing to her sister. "But death does not come to release us at moments of torture. The moment passed, and others followed, and nothing intervened to save Grace from the ordeal. She cried to God, but it seemed as though the heavens were as brass. Yet the cry brought succour of an unexpected kind. At the moment of most utter weakness, she suddenly felt strength return to her. She turned to Hester, put her arms round her, and leaned her head against her shoulder, so that she could not see her sister's face.

"Yes, Hester," she said, quietly; "it is what he has said. I do not know exactly what passed, nor how it came out. I shall never be able to recall it. But, Hester, he made me understand that he cares for me."

Hester made no sign, gave no start, uttered no word. Grace kept her face hidden, that Hester might feel her own was not being watched. By-and-by she felt Hester's frame swaying a little, and without speaking she led her to the side of the bed where she could sit down. She looked very white, and drew one or two gasping breaths. Grace brought her some water. She dared not express comprehension, or even sympathy. She said only—

"You are feeling ill, dearest. Lie down, and let me put a shawl over you."

Hester tried to smile.

"Thank you," she said; "I don't know what is the matter with me. I felt very queer just then, but I am better now."

She did not need much persuading to lie down, and Grace sat by her side, and took her hand, which was cold and passive. They were silent, and Grace's whirling brain worked restlessly. Hester only asked one question by-and-by, in a low voice—

"And you—you do not care for him?"

"You know I do not. But, Hester, I don't know what I said. It was all one terrible misunderstanding, and I could not see what was right to do. I don't even know whether he thinks I said yes or no."

Hester shuddered, but did not reply, and Grace said no more, feeling that just now she could only leave Hester to herself, and let her take the initiative. By-and-by she was called away to her mother, but before going she stooped and kissed Hester. Hester put her arm round Grace's neck, and said, with a faint smile—

"I told you that you would always be loved."

Grace was crying so much all the way downstairs that she failed to see that Mr. Waterhouse was standing at the foot. She came upon him so suddenly that it was useless to think of hiding her tears. But Waterhouse knew better now than to appear to take any notice of them. It was nevertheless perfectly understood, or rather felt by Grace, that her distress moved him very much. His face, his movements, his tones betrayed the anxious misery which he dared not voluntarily express.

"I just wanted to say to you," he began, with an awkwardness which Grace had never seen in him before, "that I have persuaded your mother to go to bed to-night. But she would not let me sit up for the whole night, as I wished, and we must fall in with her wishes, of course. You are to be with him till two, and I have promised to get a sleep, but I wanted to say to you that I shall not go to bed. I shall be in the next room, and if you want help, please tap on the wall. I don't like his look to-night, but I can't tell your mother so; she is really worn out."

"You are very kind," said Grace; "but pray go to bed. He seemed thoroughly sleepy when I went in last. He will probably sleep all the time."

"You cannot prevent my sitting up," replied Waterhouse, with a melancholy half-smile, which meant that though he were exiled from her favour, and dare not so much as offer a word of sympathy, yet he had his own poor methods of compensation with which she could not interfere. Grace did not reply. "Do just as you like," which, as a method of running cold steel through him, might have found favour with her. She was just now too crushed to have his misdeeds in remembrance. The kind voice, which had grown familiar, and was associated with the old pleasant lost days, touched at this moment some softer chord than usual, and threatened to upset her hastily assumed composure. She would have liked to forget and forgive, and to speak kindly in return, but she dared not. She felt a nervous horror lest she should give encouragement here also, and be misunderstood. To save herself from this, and because she felt tears rising which she could not keep back, she walked past Waterhouse quickly, and without a word. Her step, and the way she held her head, while it was really the result of an effort after composure, appeared haughty. Waterhouse, wounded once more, experienced a movement of anger more painful, being directed against her, than the bitterest despair. Not even

had she expressed the slightest satisfaction that he had succeeded in inducing her mother to take rest. What an index, that, of determined resentment! He went off, saying to himself that he would give her up, which, even as he said it, he knew to be impossible. When he got into his room once more and shut the door, he began to find the loneliness insufferable. For days he had scarcely gone out of the house, having given himself up to a miserable brooding, and being in no mood to seek distraction out of doors or in the society of his friends. But to-night he grimly told himself that he should go mad if he stayed in this solitary hole any longer, and that, like the Ancient Mariner, he needs must out and tell his tale to some one. The general resolved itself very soon into the particular—Denston.

"I'll go and have it out over there," he said to himself. "I'll ask his advice. Perhaps he'll infuse into me a sardonic humour, which will bring me to the point of giving her up. He will rate me for my poor spirit, and stay me with assurance of the abundance of good fish in the sea. Verily, I stand in need of some such astringent as the good fellow will apply."

He waited till the time when he was aware that the she-dragon, under which title Miss Denston figured in his thoughts, retired to rest, and then he went over. He had not seen Denston for some time, and did not know that he had resumed work again. He found him seated in his old corner, at the worn desk.

"Hallo! you're not copying?" he cried.

"No," said Denston, dragging forward a chair. "I was doing nothing." He did not welcome Waterhouse cordially. He was intensely annoyed to see him come in. But Waterhouse was not in a mood to notice either the want of cordiality or the compression of Denston's firm thin lips and the abstracted look in his eyes. He threw himself back in his chair, and, heaving a sigh, said—

"I'm afraid it's rather late to come in especially, as I'm going to bother you. But the fact is, old fellow, I am in dreadful trouble, and I want to talk some of it off."

"You in trouble?" exclaimed Denston, with concentrated hearing.

"Yes," said Waterhouse; "you fellows think you've got a monopoly of trouble, and won't allow a man with coin to know a moment's uneasiness. O dear! that sort of superficiality does irritate me!"

"Well, let the mountain bring forth the mouse," said Denston, coolly. He seated himself on the other side of the lamp, and was by-and-by glad of the shelter and obscurity.

"Well, I need not preface," began Waterhouse, a little shamefacedly, "for you are pretty well aware, no doubt, what the trouble is, for all your sang froid. You have known that I've been in love with Miss Norris this many a long day."

"I have guessed it," said Denston, after a slight pause.

"Well, foolishly enough, I told her so the other day, and was finely punished. She has snubbed me right and left ever since; will scarcely speak to me. I've gone through a precious time since I saw you last."

Waterhouse paused, but hearing nothing from Denston, went on—

"Now, I want your advice. Shall I give her up?" Denston gave a short laugh.

"I'll spare my breath," he said.

"No, nonsense! I'm in earnest. I want to know what you would advise me in such a case."

"If my advice coincided with your wishes, you would follow it. If not, it might go to the winds. Besides, you must know your request is absurd. I'm not sufficiently *am fat* with the matter to offer an opinion."

"I've told you the facts, and I'll tell you any number more that are necessary."

"Facts! What are they in such a case? Mere shells that may contain nuts, good or bad. The only advice I could give you would be to trust to your own instincts."

"Well, then you tell me to decamp, because I am perfectly hopeless."

"No, you're not. I don't believe in the hopelessness that craves contradiction. You would not have come here to-night, if you had been hopeless. You only came to be contradicted."

"Well, you are the coolest fellow—but," with sudden energy, and springing up, "I believe you're right. I haven't given up hope, and never shall."

CHAPTER XXXI. IN THE NIGHT.

GRACE, when she left Waterhouse, went into her father's room. Her mother sat, as usual, by the bedside, holding her husband's hand in hers. He was asleep, or rather, in a kind of stupor, which had been gaining hold upon him gradually during the latter part of the day, after an unusually restless night and morning. Grace could perceive, even in the dim light, that her mother was looking weary and haggard. There was no fear of disturbing the sick man, and they held a low-toned conversation.

"I am so thankful, mother, that you are going to bed at last."

"I suppose it will be best," said her mother, with a sigh, "but it is against my will."

"He will sleep; he will not need you."

"My dear, if I but take my hand away, he will rest unasily; he is quite aware that I am here."

"Well, you will save time in the end by taking a good rest. You could not get on much longer without it. Mother, why won't you let me stay the night here? Why should you arrange for Mr. Waterhouse to come? One night would not hurt me."

"You have too much on your shoulders in the day to take night work, my dear. Now, don't say another word, Grace; if you please; my mind is made up."

Mrs. Norris spoke with a querulousness most unnatural to her. Grace saw that her mother was overstrained. She made no reply, but gently stroked the hand she had enclosed in her own.

"My dear," said her mother, "you are very hard towards that poor young man. It is unlike you to be so unkind."

"You must not judge me, mother. Some day I will explain to you."

There was a slight ring of pride in Grace's voice. "Perhaps I understand better than you imagine," said Mrs. Norris. "I have seen a great deal of Mr. Waterhouse lately, and he is extremely transparent. I wonder I have not understood the state of the case before, but he has been very prudent and honourable."

"Yes, I could give a good illustration of those virtues," thought Grace, whom these remarks had thrown into profound astonishment. Was it possible that Mr. Waterhouse had gained an advocate in her mother?

"My dear child," continued her mother, in a voice of deep feeling, "don't throw away happiness for the sake of pride. I feel for you, for you have so much pride in your nature. But love is far better and higher than the independence which you value so highly."

Grace put her head upon her mother's lap and cried quietly; she had never shed so many tears in her whole life before as during the last week or two. To-night, in her thoroughly broken-down condition, this condemnation of her pride and independence seemed truly a mockery. Her mother stroked her daughter's head, and thought the tears were a good sign for Mr. Waterhouse. But Grace's emotion had sprung from many sources, of which, perhaps, her relations with Waterhouse did make one. In the foreground came intense grief for her sister. To this was added a sense of personal humiliation, very bitter—it appeared she had failed, and brought misery in every direction. And, under all, lurked a fear as to the consequences of her behaviour to Mr. Denston, which she had as yet scarcely had time to drag out for inspection. But she must rouse herself. It was getting late, and there were arrangements to be made for the night. She found when she went down that Kitty, like a good child as she was, had eaten her supper and gone to bed, and that Hester had not come down. She went up with some supper for her, but Hester could take nothing but milk, which she drank feverishly. Grace waited upon her tenderly, as though she were ill, and Hester seemed to have become a child again in her hands. The tears came into her eyes when she heard that her mother was coming to sleep with her instead of Grace, but she said nothing.

"Shall you sleep?" asked Grace.

"Yes, I think so," said Hester. "I feel sleepy already." This sent Grace down with a slight sense of comfort, though she feared Hester might be deceiving her. But it was not so. Hester was undergoing no mental struggle, neither brain nor spirit was excited. Had there been any suspense connected with the matter, had Grace announced a fear instead of a certainty, Hester would at the moment have suffered more. She would have gone about the house with trembling high-strung nerves, and spoken and acted as usual, and Grace would have doubted and wondered. And then Hester would have gone to bed and lain awake all night; and would have grown more feverish and restless day by day. But the announcement, so sudden, so complete and uncompromising, fell with a mercifully crushing blow. It put her hope "out of its misery," as we say of the maimed insect that we crush under foot. Hester herself was still alive, but something within her had died a violent death. At present she felt merely weak and passive; by-and-by there would come the burying of her dead, which would need to be done not once, but many times, and the sense of loss and vacancy. She lay there in the dark, confused and weak, with a grateful sense that sleep was not far off. She wished that Grace had been by her side to hold her hand—Grace, who had been so good to her of late, and who understood without words that she needed loving. She fell asleep before her mother came to bed. The first time she woke it was with a start from some confused dream. She found that there was a light in the room, and that her mother was not by her side. She concluded that her mother had been anxious and had gone down to see how things were going on. But not many minutes had passed before she heard Grace's step on the stairs, and her sister came in. Hester started up in bed. Grace looked very white.

"Hester," she said, "father is much worse, and we think he is going to die. Will you come down?"

The girls looked at each other.

"Did mother send for me?" asked Hester, in an awed tone.

"No, dear, but I thought you ought to know. I did not know how you would feel. You need not come unless you wish, or if you think it would be better not. I must go back at once."

"I will come," said Hester, slowly; "you think I had better?"

"I think you may be sorry afterwards if you do not."

"Yes," said Hester, rising and beginning to dress. "Have you called Kitty?"

"No, I have not. Do you think we ought to do so? She is so young, and she does not love him."

"Don't call her," said Hester, "unless mother sends for her. I think it would be dreadful for her."

"So do I," said Grace, as she left Hester alone again.

(To be continued.)

Sabbath School Work.

LESSON HELPS.

THIRD QUARTER.

LESSON XIII, September 26th. Review and Temperance.

REVIEW.

(Scripture Lesson.—The Golden Texts of the Quarter.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.—Isaiah ix. 7.

TIME.—The lessons of this quarter belong to the last six months of Jesus' ministry, from October, A. D. 29 to April 6, A. D. 30.

PLACE.—Chiefly in Jerusalem and vicinity. PARALLEL EVENTS.—Matt. xix. 1 to xxvi. 30; Mark x. 1 to xiv. 30; Luke xiii. 10 to xxiii. 39.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What portion of Jesus' life have we been studying? In what places did the chief events occur? Where were most of the discourses spoken? Were there many other events and discourses during this time not recorded by John?

SUBJECT: THE REDEEMER'S KINGDOM UNFOLDING.

I. THE REDEEMER'S NATURE FURTHER REVEALED. (Lessons 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10).—To what is Jesus likened in Lesson 2? In what respects is he like a good shepherd? What miracle is recorded in Lesson 1? What like this is he still doing for the world? What did he do for his Bethany friends? (Lesson 4) How is Jesus still the life of the world? How did one friend show her affection for him? (Lesson 5) How did the children and the people honour him? What characteristics does Jesus show in Lesson 7? How was Jesus glorified? (Lesson 6) To what does Jesus compare himself in Lesson 10? What is it to abide in him?

II. THE PRINCIPLES OF HIS KINGDOM (Lessons 2, 7, 9, 10, 11).—What is the door to this kingdom? (Lesson 2) What does the good shepherd do for his sheep? How is Christ the way? (Lesson 9) What else is he? (Lesson 9, v. 6) How may we know whether we are in the kingdom? (Lesson 10, v. 14) How did Jesus teach humility? (Lesson 7) How to love one another? What commandment lies at the basis of his kingdom? (Lesson 8) How may we remain in his kingdom? (Lesson 10, v. 4) What is the fruit we should bear? What becomes of fruitless branches? How does fruit-bearing glorify God? In what respects are all Christians one? Does this unity exist now?

III. ITS ORDINANCES (Lessons 7, 8).—What are the two great ordinances of Jesus' kingdom? What does baptism signify? Who partook of the Lord's supper? What is this supper intended to teach?

IV. ITS PROMISES AND HOPES (Lessons 4, 9, 10, 11, 12).—What did Jesus promise believers? (Lesson 4) Where had he gone to prepare a place for them? (Lesson 9) What works did he promise they should do? (Lesson 9, v. 12) What did he promise as to prayer? What great helper did he promise to send? What would he do for the disciples? (Lesson 9, 11) What to lead the world to become disciples? What joy does he give them? (Lesson 10) From what should they be kept? (Lesson 12) How should they be made holy? What glory and blessedness shall be theirs?

TEMPERANCE LESSON.

SUBJECT.—Though art weighed in the balances and found wanting (Dan. v. 27).

Read the story in this chapter of Daniel. Weigh the question of the uses of intoxicating liquors in the balances of reason.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—In what story is the subject of this lesson found? Who was weighed in the balance? What does this mean? In what balances should we weigh the question of temperance?

I. IN ONE SCALE PLACE THE REASONS IN FAVOUR OF USING STRONG DRINK.—How many reasons can you think of in favour of using intoxicating liquors? Name them. Are they good and strong reasons? Do they belong to the lower or the higher nature? Are they such as any one would be willing to acknowledge openly? What makes them induce so many to begin to drink? How are the young deceived by them?

II. IN THE OTHER SCALE PLACE THE REASONS AGAINST USING STRONG DRINK.—How many reasons can you think of against beginning to use intoxicating liquors? Name them. How is it a murderer? How does it deceive men? How does it make criminals? Of what does it rob men? How does it make slaves of them? To what good things is it opposed? With what evil things is it in sympathy? How does it injure family and friends? What does it bring upon the soul? Are the reasons stronger for or against drinking? Which course will you choose? What will you do to help others choose the better way? Have you signed the pledge?—(Selected from *Palouset*.)

SOMETIME, SOMEWHERE.

UNANSWERED yet? the prayer your lips have pleaded, In agony of heart these many years? Does faith begin to fail? Is hope departing? And think you all in vain those falling tears? Say not the Father hath not heard your prayer: You shall have your desire sometime, somewhere.

—Browning.

It seems, says the *Witness*, that Father Chiniquy while in P. E. Island was subjected to very brutal treatment. A full account of the outrage was given in the *Union*, but the issue of the paper containing that account did not reach this office. Father Chiniquy informs us that at Montague he was violently assaulted by a powerful man, and struck in the side of the face, and knocked down senseless. One of his teeth was broken out. The assailant probably thought he had killed Father Chiniquy, as he left him prostrate. Kind friends hastened to the rescue. The assailant was to be prosecuted, but at Father Chiniquy's request he was allowed to go free.