

Family Department.

"ONE OF THE SWEET OLD CHAPTERS."

One of the sweet old chapters
After a day like this ;
The day brought tears and trouble,
The evening brings no kiss.

No rest in the aims I long for—
Rest and refuge and home ;
Grieved and lonely and weary,
Unto the Book I come.

One of the sweet old chapters—
The love that blossoms through
His care of the birds and lilies
Out in the evening dew.

His evening lies softly around them ;
Their faith is simply to be.
Oh, hushed by the tender lesson,
My God, let me rest in Thee.

—Selected.

CLAIRE.

A TALE.

(Written for the Church Guardian).

By T. M. B.

(Continued.)

Colourless as ashes was the face that Claire turned towards the Count. "You wrong me," she said—you wrong me, father, I would spend my life in trying to make you happy. I would live for you, but *this* I cannot do. "Listen to me," she cried, as he again broke forth with an exclamation that his will should be obeyed, "am I not your only child? Listen to me, for my mother's sake." You have never spoken to me of her, but there must have been a time when you loved her—think of her in her youth, as I am now, when she gave you her heart and her life—think of her as she lay dead. I can just remember her cold face with a smile upon the lips—for her sake, father, bear with me. At the mention of his dead wife, the Count had turned away, with a dark, troubled look upon his face; and Claire, rising suddenly, fell on her knees before him. For a moment it seemed as though he would have thrust her from him, then he yielded to the spell of those imploring eyes. The Countess Gertrude's spirit seemed to be looking at him from them, and the memory of her wrongs, buried far down in his selfish and frivolous heart, awoke and stirred within him. "Father, would not your ease and comfort be dearly bought with the sacrifice of your child? Should I not be a living reproach to you? Would you not lose your self-respect?" He did not answer, only gazed at her, as though another form were kneeling before him, and another scene surrounding him. "O let us love each other more, my father, then we shall be content with one another, and you will learn to be happy, as I shall be, in humbler surroundings, and find that fate has not been so cruel after all. I am young and strong, we shall find ways and means of getting on as others do, and you will know that you have not wronged your only child. Speak to me," she continued, for the Count was silent, still gazing at her with a haggard, troubled face, "tell me that you will trust your child, and learn to be happy with her." Timidly, yet tenderly, she bent forward, and laid her fair head upon his shoulder, while her hand crept about his neck, "kiss me, father, for my mother's sake." And for the first time in Claude du Plessis' life, he realized and yielded to the power of a higher nature; touched with a mute wonder, stirred with an awakening love for this fair, pure daughter whom, but a few moments before, he had vowed to sacrifice to his ignoble self-love, and with a stifled groan of remorse, he pressed his lips to the fair tresses, and Claire's heart leapt within her, as she felt a hot tear upon her forehead.

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Spring was gladdening the earth, giving even the London of a century ago a touch of brightness. The trees in St. James' Park were beginning to put forth their leaves—the towers of the Abbey were

gilded here and there with soft sunlight. Claire could see them from the window where she sat, sewing and singing a little song to herself. It was one that Ursule had taught her in the olden days, under the pine-trees of du Plessis, when she was a little child—

"Soit la bien venue
Petite hirondelle—
J'aime entendre ta voix hémécuse."

"Soit la bien venue," sang the sweet, clear voice, and then the busy hands paused in their work, and the blue, wistful eyes gazed out into the pale sky, and rested on those ancient towers that were to her as friends. Claire was happy in her new life, solitary as it often was, happy with the sweet consciousness that God had blessed it. That interview with her father in the Yew-arch at Twickenham had wrought a transformation in the Count's feelings which had been permanent; not that his shallowness and selfishness had been suddenly overcome—it would have taken another life time to undo the results of one mis-spent, as his had been, but the dawn of better things had dated from that day, and while Claire had knelt at his knees, a sudden flash of inward knowledge had been vouchsafed him which made him shudder. He had acquiesced without the slightest resistance in Claire's plan, that they should without delay seek a modest home for themselves in London, and, after an unpleasant interview with the Marquis, in which that disappointed nobleman had said many bitter things in polished language, the father and daughter had bidden him farewell, Claire courteously thanking him for his hospitality, and the Marquis, graceful to the last, conducting them to the coach which he had put at their disposal to convey them to the city. Here, after a few days sojourn, at an inn, they had found such a quiet little nook as Claire desired. The Count applied himself to searching out such friends as he knew to be in the city, exiles like themselves, and with their help, Claire had found work to do in teaching French in some families by whom she was fairly remunerated. They were doing what hundreds of others like themselves were doing, and she assured her father that she asked nothing better than this employment which was perfectly congenial to her. And, indeed, so much was she admired and beloved by her young pupils, that the weariness of teaching was but little felt.

The Count, to his own astonishment, grew, in a measure, reconciled to a manner of life vastly different from that which he had contemplated. He found himself surrounded by a tender affection and solicitude to which even the most callous nature could not have been indifferent. The aim of Claire's life was to make him content, and to win his affection. For herself she desired nothing else, all her plans centered in him. Some valuable ornaments which had belonged to her mother, and which, for that mother's sake, she had treasured, Ursule had packed up among the few trifles which Claire had taken with her, on the evening of her flight from the Chateau du Plessis. Reserving but one or two, as dear remembrances, she had converted the rest into money, which had enabled her to brighten their home, and even to give an air of simple elegance to the little *salon* where some of the Count's old friends would oftentimes meet to recall the vanished past, to dwell upon their wrongs, or to discuss the probabilities of a near future, which should redress them.

Faith in this *future* was the brightening element in the lives of these exiles. To many, the narrow circumstances and dull routine of their present existence would else have been well-nigh insupportable, but these visions of a better time, these castles in the air which they were so unwearied in building, made the present seem but a narrow and sordid passage which they could cheerfully traverse, because it led to their promised land. Claire, listening sometimes to their passionate harangues, wondered whether the day would ever come when her father might return to that existence in which he had been so far removed from her, when their two lives, now so intimately intertwined, had lain so far apart. But that could never be again, for she had a hold now upon her father's heart which she had never possessed before. For herself she had no wish for any change in their present fortunes. Could she but have seen the dear, old

face of her foster mother in their home, she would have been quite content. There had been a brief glimpse of happiness, troubled and vague, but very sweet during the weeks which followed her flight from du Plessis, which had gone out of Claire's life, when Felix and Marthe had bidden her farewell, and days of weary loneliness had followed it, but the necessity for action on her part, the care which had devolved upon her, the wholesome interests and occupations of her daily life, above all, her new relations to her father, her unwearied efforts to surround him with comfort and cheering influences, her natural unselfishness—all this had helped her to recover her tone of mind, and to give the sweet serenity to her face which made her father's friends regard her somewhat in the light of a Madonna, and treat her with chivalrous deference.

(To be continued.)

THOUGHTS FOR ELEVENTH SUNDAY
AFTER TRINITY.

No. XI.

"I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other."

To those who trust in themselves that they are righteous and despise others this parable of the Pharisee and Publican is spoken. How worthless in the sight of the Most High was the righteousness of the self-righteous Pharisee, the rectitude that was so conscious of itself that compared itself so complacently with the shortcomings of others! Of how far greater value the contrition and self-abasement of the despised publican. Ah! could the Pharisee suddenly have had laid bare before him the relative position in God's sight of himself and of him whom he had made the foil and offset of his own virtues, would it not have made him cast himself down in speechless shame, feeling that the righteousness in which he had wrapped himself was indeed but filthy rags! Truly we may and must thank our God, if we are not as some men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers—we may and must thank Him for every good thought, word or deed which has been ours, but it must be in the spirit of deep humility rather than of pride. What have we to do with pride, we whose brightest virtues, so accounted by men, are such poor, imperfect things! The thanksgiving of the Pharisee must be uttered in the contrite spirit of the publican. What ever good is in me is of Thee, God of all grace and giver of all good. What have I that I did not receive! I am as nothing in Thy sight, God be merciful to me a sinner. Blinded and unblessed the Pharisee went down to his house,—no nearer God,—but the publican—did he not feel in his trembling soul the blessed dawn of a better life, the stirring of the Spirit of Grace, the consciousness of being forgiven? Had not that cry of passionate repentance brought him into immediate contact with his Father and his God? We see him going homeward with the new light upon his face and in his heart.

TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

More than fifty years ago the late Dr. Bacon closed a sermon to young Christians with the following appeal, the spirit of which was grandly illustrated in his after life:—

"Would to God I could make you know what results are depending upon you; what interests of the Church and of a dying world are involved in your future character and efforts. When I look at the young Christians of this age and reflect that they are soon to sustain the ancient glories of the Church of God—when I look abroad on the earth and see the crisis that is at hand—when I listen to the cries that come from every quarter of the world summoning the people of God to new effort and more splendid exhibitions of piety—I seem to see the hoary generations that are passed rising up from their repose to watch over the young followers of Christ; I seem to hear the voices of blessed spirits from above cheering them on in the career of piety; I seem to see a world in misery, turning its imploring hands to them, and beseeching them to be worthy of their name, worthy of their privileges, worthy of their noble destiny; I seem to hear, I do hear, God Himself speaking from the heavens, 'ye have chosen the better part, be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life.'"