

Choice Literature.

OUT OF SIGHT.

Margaret Carter, her cheeks flushed, her eyes sparkling, dragged her aunt Jane from room to room to show her new house and her wedding presents. She laughed and almost danced as she walked, in sheer delight.

"I have everything that heart could wish for, Aunt! Nobody could find a fault with John—character or appearance or position. We have a good income, and this house is perfect. I start fair. I am going to be a model housekeeper. I have divided off the days. So much time for the house, so much for study, for social duties, for church work. I mean to excel in every walk of life. You see?" with a keen flash of the eye which hinted that her jest was secretly earnest.

They sauntered through every apartment.

"But where," asked Miss Tracy, "are Mr. Carter's musical instruments? I heard he had a most interesting collection."

"Oh! a lot of old Chinese drums and Arabic flutes. Dingy, ugly things! He could not play upon them. I put them in the garret. I could not have the house cluttered up with them. It was just a fad of John's."

"Love me, love my fads," said her aunt, laughing.

"My love does not show itself about such object trifles," said the bride, too vexed to be grammatical. "My husband thank God, knows how true and deep it is! If ever great trials come into our life it will not fail him. I can go down with him into the depths."

Miss Tracy was touched by the ardent light in the young wife's eyes. The tears came to her own.

"Still, my dear," she said, "I should bring out his battered drums."

Mrs. Carter hastened to change the subject. "Now here is Uncle Tom's gift. A cashmere shawl. Yes, it is wonderful. It was made for a Ranee. It makes me feel as if I were a queen to own it. I am the Ranee, secretly, unbeknown to you all."

The old lady fingered the exquisite web with delight. "Why don't you wear it, Margaret?" she exclaimed. "Why don't you keep it out of sight? It gives one such genuine pleasure to look at these colours."

"No," said Mrs. Carter, folding it up and replacing it in the box; "one must not make precious things common. Cashmere shawls—or love," she added significantly, with a smile of calm superiority usual to women who are young enough to be sure that they are infallible.

Miss Tracy's visit to the newly-married pair lasted but a couple of days. She was a quiet middle-aged woman, who supported herself by teaching. Margaret who had been a motherless girl loved her better than all the wealthy aunts and cousins who had petted and indulged her since childhood.

"Aunt Jane," she told her husband, "had nothing to give me; but I drop my anchor on her! She loves me as my mother would have done!"

In spite of this tender affection, however, Miss Tracy had rarely ventured to advise her very intelligent and resolute niece before marriage, and now she hesitated long before she hinted a warning. But she was not blind.

"I don't think," she said, gently, one night when Margaret took her to her room, "that John cares for classical music."

"He ought to care," said his wife, sharply. "I'll educate him up to it."

"He is very fond of ballads. Why would you not sing them for him, dear?"

"Milk for babies," laughed Margaret. "I will not humor him in such ridiculous tastes."

Miss Tracy hesitated. "It seems to me, Margaret, that you do not humor him in any tastes, whether it be for ballads or hot cakes, or an idle walk alone with you."

"Affection does not show itself in indulging childish fancies. I will show John other and better ways."

"That is—your ways."

"If you like to have it so, yes. They are not childish."

The next morning Miss Tracy found her niece environed by a formal array of Green Testaments, lexicons, and concordances. "This is my hour for Bible study," she exclaimed. "I have no family worship. It is so apt to become a merely perfunctory form. I never intend religion to become a hackneyed platitude from too common use in my house." She spoke, as she often did, as if reciting phrases which she had conned in private.

"But," hesitated the older woman, going back perhaps to some dream of her own of that marriage which never came to her, "forgive me, dear child, but I suppose you and John read a chapter every day and pray together?"

The young wife flushed. "John is not a member of any church," she said coldly. "I do not intend to thrust my faith upon him at regular intervals like his food and clothes. Some time—if a great trouble or any crisis in life should come to us—I will bring the matter before him."

"But—don't you think that men really at heart care more for the question of religion than for any other? Don't you think, too, that they look upon women as a kind of born missionaries? No doubt John expects you to speak of this thing and is surprised that you do not do it."

"I shall do it at a fitting season," said Mrs. Carter, in a tone, which effectually closed the subject.

After Miss Tracy had gone Margaret seriously considered this matter. She fancied that John sometimes looked wistfully at her Bible, which lay on the little table near her bed. Could Aunt Jane be right? Would he like to read and kneel with her to pray?

Margaret Carter loved her husband and loved her God; but her love like her Indian shawl, was hidden carefully away, to be produced only on great emergencies. Her religion was of a kind which takes keen delight in a great theological argument. She thought, indeed, of the Almighty as an immortal dogma. It was not the religion which would find vent in snatches of fervent hymns, or in the upward glancing of an eye to a dear Father who never had failed to hear her.

Her lofty, righteous theory about wife-duties and love would have struck terror into a host of Western divorcees. But as for running to meet John when he came in, or bothering the cook about the seasoning of her favorite dishes, or listening to his mild jokes she knew her place and his place in creation quite too well for any such folly. And, undoubtedly, John's oft-repeated jokes were tiresome, and he was undeniably fussy about his food, and he had a childish loving temperament that made him happy when he was caressed and humored, all of which traits pallied upon Margaret.

Nothing could have been more simple or natural when they were first married than for her to have put her Bible in his hands asking him to read; or for her to have drawn him down with her as she knelt to pray. He would have been glad to kneel and find again the Father that he used to know when he was a child; for, big whiskered fellow that he was, he was but a boy, and but a lonely boy, at heart.

But as weeks passed into months, and months into years, it seemed impossible for her to do this.

She put the thing at last out of her thoughts. Life was long before them. If John should be ill, or lose all his money, or any supreme moment like that should arrive, she would bring her faith before him with victorious effect. She would show him then how a Christian could endure and triumph. But the years jogged on prosperous and dull; no supreme moment came.

As time came there came between them a silence, not of words but of thoughts and feelings. He probably did not believe in a love which was not demonstrative. She had an older and more masculine nature than this. People who knew John well noticed a gradual change in him. He had been a man full of gen-

tle enthusiasms, a man who gave and exacted much kindness and affection. He had been, perhaps, jealous and unreasonable in his exactions; but he now grew slowly indifferent, cold and cynical to his friends. There was a wistful look in his eyes, like that of a man who has lost something out of life which he shall never find.

Occasionally he occupied a seat in the pew which Mrs. Carter owned in the church in which she was an energetic worker, and sometimes, meeting the minister afterwards, he disputed his arguments good humoredly.

"A most interesting man," the rector said to his wife one day. "Full of keen perceptions and sensibilities! I wish we could draw him into the church."

"Why do you not bring the subject home to him?"

"I do, in the pulpit, as directly as I can. He is a man who would require the tenderest touch. If his wife has been labouring in vain all these years, what can I do?"

So it happened, by these easy, natural chances, that when John Carter last winter fell ill and came down to the edge of that outer darkness which lies so near to us all, nobody had put into his hands the lamp which would have lighted his way.

Mrs. Carter nursed him skilfully. It was not in intelligence nor energy that she failed. But the time came when the consulting physician, with the usual grave, gentle formula, suggested that "if there were any matters of moment which Mr. Carter should attend to?" His will, probably?"

"That is done—it is not that!" gasped Margaret. "But I must speak to him, and he does not hear. He lies there in that hopeless stupor."

"It is a phase of the disease, madame, an alarming phase, to be candid."

Mrs. Carter hurried from the room.

"I suppose," said the family doctor, "it is his religious condition that she is thinking of. Too late to open up that subject to poor Carter. His brain stopped work an hour ago."

Miss Tracy, who had helped to nurse John, met Margaret in the hall.

What is it? What have they told you?" she cried, seeing her face.

"He is dying. Don't touch me. I am not going to faint. I understand."

She had never been more keenly awake or alive. The whole future yawned before her—empty.

"I see it all now," she said, turning her ghastly face to the door of his chamber. "I see what a lonely life he has had. He never knew how I loved him. There was never any way for me to show it. It wasn't my fault that the chance did not come."

The two women went to the dying man and were left alone with him. He was sunk in a heavy stupor.

"He is going," said Margaret; and what has he to take with him yonder? I have given him nothing."

He roused at last a little and looked at her with dulled eyes.

"It is I, John, I, Margaret. You know that I loved you? I have not shown you as I ought. Oh! for God's sake say that you know!"

His eyes closed drowsily.

"Don't reproach yourself, my dear," he said, in the gentle, hopeless tones she knew so well.

"Shall I pray with you? Oh, John, think of the Saviour, think of!"

But he did not hear her. He muttered something about sleeping awhile, and turned away. He never awakened from the sleep.

Mrs. Carter, when she had laid her husband in the earth, went abroad to forget her old life or to begin a new one. Miss Tracy was left in charge of her home. One day she opened the box in which lay the priceless Indian web; it had been hidden out of sight in the damp so long that the moth and dampness had done their work. Nothing was left but a mass of rags and dust.

The old woman shook her head.

"More precious things than this grow worthless if hid away too carefully," she said, with sad significance.—Rebecca Harding Davis in the Independent.

GEMS FROM CARDINAL MANNING.

The world's kisses are death to the hidden life.

A lax life has many sorrows, but a strict life has many joys.

Do not fear to be thought over strict; do not fear to be reproached as extreme; do not fear to be in a minority.

Never do we so put off the paint and masquerade of life as when we are alone under the Eye which seeth in secret.

Our share in the Beatific Vision will be according to our merit, and our merit will be according to our charity.

After the fret and fever of a few short years will come the river of the water of life—"the times of refreshment" and the rest of God.

To give time, care and sympathy in the miserable homes of the poor is the best oblation we can make to Him, Who gave Himself for us.

Life is very short, and the world to come already dawns upon us. Choose boldly a life devoted to Christ. Be His above all; be His only.

Larger measures of knowledge are a great stewardship. It is an awful mercy to be greatly exalted—to be highly favored above other men.

Be sure that in God alone can the deep cravings of our immortal being find enough. He has so made man's heart for Himself that it is ever restless until it finds rest in Him.

Remember that you are immortal, realise your own immortality. Remember it all day long, in all places; live as men whose every act is ineracably recorded, whose every change may be recorded for ever.

Let us not sorrow that we are stripped of all we love, but rather rejoice that God accepts us; let us not think that we are left here, as it were, unseasonably alone, but remember that, by our own brave-ments, we are in part translated to the world unseen.

The longest life, how short! The fairest earthly bliss, how poor! A few short years and all will be over. Then shall be no more sin and jar, no more infirmity and imperfection; then we shall have the power to taste of bliss, and to endure the taste.

The most fearful and wonderful of mysteries is man. To be ever changing, and yet to be immortal; that, after this change-ful life ended, there should be life everlasting, or the worm that dieth not, bespeaks some deep counsel of God, some high destiny of man.

Let us bear in mind this truth—that on the bed of death, and on the Day of Judgment, to have saved one soul will be not only better than to have won a kingdom, but will overlay by an exceeding great reward all the pains and toils of the longest and most toilsome life.

Live as you would wish to die, because as you die so you will be for all eternity. Precisely that character which you have woven for yourself through life, by the voluntary acts of free will, be it for good or for evil, that will be your eternal state before God. As the tree falls, so shall it lie. Make one mistake, and that mistake is made forever.

What is it that keeps us perpetually straining and moiling and wearing ourselves away but some desire which is not chastened, some thought of the heart which is not dead to its worldly state? What makes us lament the flight of time and the changes of the world, but that we are still a part of it, and share its life? What makes us die so hard, but that we leave behind us more treasures than we have laid up in Heaven; that our hearts are not there, but here?

Courage that grows from constitution often forsakes the man when he has occasion for it; courage which arises from a sense of duty acts in a uniform manner.—Addison.

There are very few original thinkers in the world; the greatest part of those who are called philosophers have adopted the opinions of those who went before them.—Dugald Stewart.