

Family Reading.

GOOD ADVICE.

Dare to be honest, good and sincere;
Dare to please God, and you never need
fear.

Dare to be brave in the cause of the right,
Dare with the enemy ever to fight.

Dare to be loving and patient each day,
Dare speak the truth in whatever you say.

Dare to be gentle and orderly, too,
Dare shun the evil whatever you do.

OUR NELL.

CHAPTER 3.

Walter laughed, and rubbed his hands. "Perfectly right, cousin; but I fancy you have already seen enough of me to perceive that, in this instance, I am not misleading you. I assure you I can kill any amount of time. A box of cigars, my sketch-book, some half-dozen volumes of literature, and plenty of room to knock about in, in-doors and out—I don't want much besides; and when I have my mother's best friend, and almost my only one, the good cousin Lettice, of whom I have heard so much," and here Walter put his hand affectionately on Miss Lettice's shoulder, "what more can I want?"

Miss Lettice was touched. She had loved the young man's mother with the protecting love of the strong for the weak, and now her keen grey eyes softened in a mist of feeling, and the firm shrewd lines of her face melted into tenderness. She took the hand that rested on her shoulder.

"You remind me of your mother," she said, softly.

But, with Miss Lettice, feeling was never allowed long on the surface.

They were standing at the open French window, and now Miss Lettice stepped out and bustled herself in breaking dead roses from the bush which climbed round it.

"Well, now, cousin, let us come to an understanding," said Walter, leaning against the lintel. "You are to make a stranger of me no longer. I would gladly be of use, if I could" (here Miss Lettice smiled), "but I know exactly what kind of a morning is before you, and it strikes me that if I took myself off to that tree over yonder I should probably be of the greatest use to which I could put myself just now. Don't I know the domestic and parochial confabulations that await you, the salts and senna for the old men and flannel petticoats for the old women?"

"Come, come! surely epigram does not demand such gross anachronism. Even old women do not crave flannel petticoats in this June sunshine. But I will take you at your word, Walter, and, as your stay is to be a long one, we will agree to pursue our separate avocations, and see no more of each other than is good for us. I shall see you at two, for dinner; though I am afraid you will hardly be ready for it at our primitive hour?"

"Haven't I told you that I enjoy everything, heartily including a two-o'clock dinner? I find there is nothing like sunshine for making one hungry. Good-bye, then, cousin; I am about to make myself useful by smoking the buds of your rose-trees. I am sorry you disapprove of smoking, for I fear I am incorrigible. It is characteristic of me. I am the sort of man who always smokes."

"A man of your age has no excuse for it. You will find me very straight-laced, I warn you, cousin, Walter;" and Miss Lettice gave the young man a smile which contradicted the words.

Two hours later, Walter Derwent began to experience the monotony of existence. He was lying full length under the beech-tree on the lawn, dreamily watching kaleidoscope leaves dance on

their background of blue. He cast about for a sufficiently cogent motive for a change. It was a characteristic of the man that the required impulse should come from the world outside; Walter was more often moved to action from without than from within. A little breeze ruffled the leaves, and played with his brown hair. It was odoriferous with new mown-hay. He sniffed, stretched, and finally betook himself through the shrubbery into the high road, with an idea of finding the place whence the breeze had caught up its scent.

His reflections were of his cousin Lettice.

"That is a good woman, and a clever, and she has the faculty for making one comfortable, mentally and bodily, which every woman ought to have. I fancy she never treads on one's corns, and that will be a comfort, if I am to stay here long. My vanity is not susceptible, thank Heaven! but there's something horrible in a *gauche* woman: that seems as much out of nature as the ugly ones. But, somehow, for all her good qualities, she's not exactly my style. She's too positive a woman—a little too much common-sense, perhaps. A woman should be sweet. Now, my mother was adorably sweet. Ah! and so was Annette. Now I come to think of it, I never loved a woman that was not sweet, and, I suppose, never shall. But Annette would have nothing to say to me. I wonder how that was."

Walter's reflections were here cut short, for he attained the aim of his wanderings. The tall hedge-row, tapestried with honeysuckles and dog-roses, in the shade of which he had been walking, now gave place to the open gate of a field. Walter leaned his arms on the topmost bar, and looked about him. Three stalwart mowers sat under a hedge, discussing their midday meal with stolid satisfaction, sharing amongst them a can of home-brewed.

Shrieks of merriment came from the other side of the field, where Nell and Bob were enjoying a frolic, before setting off home with the empty can. Nell was on her knees, smothering Bob in a haystack. Derwent watched them with interest. Presently they started to go home, Bob perched on Nell's shoulder, scattering grass from his pinafore and curly locks.

"Have done, you little rascal! Behave yourself, or down you go again to be smothered," cried Nell, as Bobby gleefully pulled her hair over her eyes with his chubby little fist.

"My word! that's a nice girl!" said Derwent to himself. "What a voice! as bright as a bell. And she walks like a young huntress of Diana. Her mind as healthy as her body, I'll be sworn. Too thin, and not a beauty, but as breezy and fresh as a spring morning."

Nell came on with her decisive swinging step, till she caught sight of the stranger. At sight of him she came to a dead stop, and colored high; for Nell was proud, and deemed her attitude undignified. Bobby was quietly lifted down to his usual position, but three feet from the dusty earth, and without any remonstrance on his part; for Bobby was shy, and was glad of the shelter of his sister's gown.

"Good-morning to you," said Walter, with a pleasant smile, raising his cap.

"Good-morning, sir," answered Nell, giving him a grave, full look from her steady eyes, as she passed by him into the road.

CHAPTER 4.

When Nell awoke in the morning from her sound and dreamless sleep, it was usually with a sense of life and gladness. The day before her always held plenty of work in it, and for some girls it would have held few pleasures; but Nell exulted in work. Activity was her element, and the sense of having something to accomplish was to her a necessity.

But one morning, before the close of the hay harvest, Nell awoke without

this jubilant sensation. For the first time in her life, the morning brought her the dull consciousness of a trouble which a night's rest could only suspend, and not cure. She was too sleepy at first to understand the feeling which possessed her, till the wet crumpled handkerchief lying on her pillow reminded her how she had cried herself to sleep.

Nell knew nothing of sorrow. The sea of human suffering that surged up to her very door had not yet crossed its threshold. Her mother, it was true, was given to making moan and lamentation on occasion, but as the causes of her affliction were matters of indifference to Nell, she set down this tendency in her as one naturally belonging to advanced life; a period which she thankfully reflected was far enough from herself.

She had no fear of the possibilities life might hold for her. Nell lived in the hour, reflected little, and had besides a large share of that blind trust in our own future which is born with most of us, and which it takes a great deal to crush out. We have an instinctive belief that the terrible nature of certain calamities is enough to insure us from them.

This rude philosophy, which Nell held none the less firmly that she held it quite unconsciously, had received its first shock.

The blow was the more stunning that it came upon her through her father, who had more of her love and honor and trust than any other human being.

His sight had long been failing, and Nell knew that when he had been over to the county town on business, he had been several times to see Dr. Pettigrew, the clever young doctor.

But he had never spoken of the result of these visits, and no one liked to question him.

Of late, his stick had become a necessity to him whenever he moved; once he had stumbled over his arm-chair, which was standing out of its usual corner; and it was now an understood thing that Nell should go to be eyes to him in his daily trudge over the farm, should write his letters, and read him the news from his weekly paper.

His habitual self-repression, however, and the gradual way in which had come about these concessions to his increasing blindness, had combined to keep the household from realising it.

But the night before, Nell had gone to say good-night to her father as he sat in his arm-chair, and he had got up and put his two hands on her shoulders and turned her face to the light, and then he had gazed into it with so wistful a straining of his dim eyes, and so a yearning a tenderness in his usually stern face, that Nell could scarcely draw her breath for awe and wonderment.

And then he had said, "Nell, I shall not see thee long," and had kissed her in a solemn way, such as he had never done before.

And she had answered nothing, but had rushed away, with hot tears in her eyes that would not fall, and a suffocating pain at her heart. It seemed but a few minutes ago that that had happened; she could feel her father's kiss upon her forehead still. And yet how like a dream it was!

This morning's sights and sounds were just like other mornings'. The cocks were crowing, and the hens clucking, out in the farmyard; Sally passed under her window with a clatter of milk-pails, and an exchange of jovial greetings with Job and William. The morning sun streamed into her room, and shone upon the queer birds in the wall-paper, which had charmed her in childish days; upon the hanging book-shelves, with the worm-eaten dusty books in it that no one ever read; and upon the old oak press, in which she had kept her frocks ever since she could remember. Nell loved light, and it comforted her, and the familiar aspect of things reassured her. The trouble seemed to belong to the girl who lay sobbing in the dark last night, and

not at all to the Nell who now sprang out of bed, and began to make herself ready for the bustle of the cheerful day.

Night intensifies alike our joys and our pains. We hug them to us in the darkness, and abandon ourselves to our imaginations and emotions; but when the morning comes, we are apt to feel ashamed of them—they seem pitiful and unreal, and we rise up and cast them from us. But Nell's nature was of more persistent stuff than this. The horror and the despair had gone with the darkness, but the burden of care remained. Nell had no impulse to shake it off, but rather set her shoulders firmly to sustain it, and tried to realize it in all its aspects. By the time she opened her door to go down stairs, the conflicting thoughts within her had resolved her thoughts into one—a longing desire that her father might meet it with open recognition. Nell's first impulse, with regard to any situation in which she found herself, was to look it firmly in the face. To shrink, in matters great or small, was foreign to her. She felt that if this, which had befallen them, might be no more a thing to be guessed at, to be shuddered at in secret, to be ignored in family talk, the sting would be taken from it. As she set about helping Sally to get the breakfast she had her father's face before her eyes, as she feared to see it, with the veil of stern reserve upon it, which had been so strangely uplifted the night before. Full of anguish as that moment had been, Nell dreaded to see her father's pain shut back again within himself, cutting off the possibility of that common sharing of grief which is the divine right of love.

(continued.)

"I never complained of my condition but once," said an old man, "when my feet were bare, and I had no money to buy shoes; but I met a man without feet, and became contented."

I have been always wont to commend and admire the great humility of those great and profound wits, whom depth of knowledge hath not led into by-paths in judgment; but, walking in the beaten path of the Church, have bent all their forces to the establishment of received truths, accounting it greater glory to confirm an ancient verity than to devise a new opinion, though never so profitable, unknown to their predecessors. I will not reject a truth for mere novelty; old truths may come newly to light; neither is God tied to times for the gift of His illumination; but I will suspect a novel opinion of untruth, and not entertain it, unless it may be deduced from ancient grounds.—Bishop Hall.

CLINGING TO THE ROCK.

One morning last summer I was standing in the shadow of a great rock by the sea-shore. It rose hundreds of feet toward the sky, its grey sides so steep and awful that it made me giddy to look up. Presently I saw, far above my head, little patches of white and golden, and I soon found they were cluster of "moon" daisies which had taken root in tiny holes in the rock and flowered there, and their brave little heads up at that great height nodded as happily to the sunshine and the breeze as though they had been growing down in some low-lying, level field. The dark waves might break and toss on the rocky shore below, and the rough breeze come close up to them and shake them as if determined to carry them away, but the daisies had no fear. They were perfectly safe, for they were clinging to the rock, and that rock was stronger than the wind and the waves of the sea. So are all little children in the arms of Jesus.

The skin of a boiled egg is the most efficacious remedy that can be applied to a boil. Peel it carefully, wet and apply it to the part affected. It will draw off the matter and relieve the soreness in a few hours.