

REHOBOTH.

A PARABLE FROM THE LIFE OF ISAAC.

GENESIS XXXI 19-23

"I am not afraid to labour."

I said, "I will dig for my well,

And the music of gushing waters

Shall sound like the silver bell

That rings for the mirth and joyance

Of a festival glad and gay;

I will drink of my well's clear water

Till all thirst shall have passed away.

And lo! in the earth's cool bosom

A life-giving spring was found:

I blessed my God for the fountain,

And carefully hedged it round;

I sang my psalms where it sparkled,

And knelt by its side to pray.

Twas a source of delight to my spirit

Through the whole of the happy day.

But then there were sounds of discord

Marring my pleasant life;

I might not keep what I digged for,

My well was a source of strife.

Others would drink of its waters,

And a right to the fountain claim.

So I passed away in my sorrow,

Leaving the well but a name.

But the world is large, and I wandered,

And came to another place,

And toiled for the cooling water.

And found it by God's good grace.

Yet again was it wrested from me

This also might not be mine.

So I yielded to man's contention

This well that in light did shine.

Another, and yet another:—

What then? Shall I dig no more,

For the treasure and joy and comfort,

I vain would have for my store?

Is the world indeed so crowded?

That there cannot be room for me?

Are the wells of delight all taken,

Nor any left glad and free?

Nay, to-day I will sing with gladness,

That has not a touch of gloom;

I stand by a well of water.

For the Lord hath for me made room.

I joy in my Father's blessing,

And discord can never be.

With work or place or possession,

Which the Lord has given to me."

Oh, brothers, grown often weary

Of toil that is all in vain,

Learn how the bright day cometh

After the night of pain:—

Work on, for God some time setteth

His own in a large, free place;

Wait on, for the well ne'er faileth

In the land where we see His face.

MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

Our Story.

RUTH HALLEY'S THANK OFFERING.

Allow me to introduce myself, Ruth Halley, almost ten when my story begins. My sister Kate was eight years my senior. She was beautiful, talented, and lovely in character, and all the warm, strong affections of my young heart were entwined around her. In short, she was the family idol. She had hardly entered her teens, when her charming bits of poetry and thrilling sketches appeared in our town paper, the *Argus*, which were pronounced by good critics to be of a superior order, and she evinced an equal ability for music. Our parents were proud of their gifted daughter, and nothing gratified them more than to hear her called "a genius, who would make her mark in the world and become a celebrated woman.

Four years Kate had occupied the foremost place in every class of which she was a member in the Hazeltine Young Ladies Seminary, and now the day for the examination, and the graduation of the seniors, had come. The hall was early filled with the patrons and friends of the school. The young ladies, dressed in white muslin, with long pink sashes, carrying bouquets of flowers, made a fine appearance as they came in and took the reserved seats. Then the programme, printed on nicely tinted paper, was circulated among the

visitors, and it filled my heart with childish delight to see the name of Kate Halley conspicuously upon it.

The exercises were listened to with absorbing interest, and though each acquitted herself creditably, not one could equal my peerless sister Kate. She read a brilliant poem in a loud, rich voice, executed a difficult piece of music upon the piano, and gave the valedictory, which was pronounced a masterpiece of composition. This was one of the happiest days of my life, and when Kate took her diploma and left the platform followed by a score of admiring eyes, I could have knelt before her and worshipped her.

"Miss Kate Halley is a very remarkable girl," Mr. and Judge Rice say to Deacon Flint.

"Yes, she is a shining intellect, but the physical is frail," was the earnest answer. "Such rare precocity should be restrained, not stimulated. This high-pressure system of education is wrong. It kills and ruins the health of thousands."

That evening after Kate had retired to our bedroom, I said:

"Oh Kate! you've had lots of praise to-day. Ever so many have said you'll make your mark as a poetess. Does mark mean famous?"

"Yes, I suppose so," replied Kate, wearily.

"And famous people's names are in all the papers, and their photographs are shown in all the shop windows, and their lives are written. You are so pretty; your picture will look real well in front of a book; yes, it will."

Kate laughed merrily.

"And great authors get great prices," I continued emphatically. "You'll have all the money you want. Well, I can never be pretty, or make verses as you do, but it will be kind o' nice to be called the sister of Miss Kate Halley the poetess."

"Ruth, you are one of the dearest, best little girls in the world. If success lies before me you shall share it with me," and she kissed me fondly.

That night Kate tossed restlessly on her bed. The exciting events of the day banished all sleep from her eyes, and when morning came she arose pale and exhausted. A few hours later she complained of a severe headache. It grew rapidly worse. Her cheeks were red, and her forehead was hot. Her eyes were wild and bright, and she said strange things in a loud, unnatural voice. Dr. Hartwell was called. He examined the case thoroughly and then asked:

"Mrs. Halley, has anything unusual occurred to excite or overtax your daughter?"

"The examination of her school was held yesterday. She graduated and gave the valedictory; but I never saw her seem brighter or better."

"Her nervous system has had a heavy strain. It is a misdirected ambition which leads parents and teachers to force the mind of the young. Another victim of mental abuse," said the doctor, impatiently.

He then gave directions about the medicine and went away.

The hours passed one after another. Kate's delirium and fever continued to increase, and her pulse grew feebler and quicker.

Upon Dr. Hartwell's third visit he shook his head seriously.

Mother followed him into the parlor with a white anxious face, and seized his arm.

"Is there still hope?" she asked in a hoarse whisper.

"The Great Physician alone can save her."

A cry of agony burst from mother's lips.

"She must not, shall not die. I could bear it, if it were Ruth; but I can-

not part with Kate. Oh, I cannot let her die."

I was sitting on a low chair in the corner during this conversation. A shiver ran over my frame. The thought that Kate was going to die almost paralyzed me. No wonder, she was the best loved daughter. I was plain-featured and uncomely in form, and could never expect to be poetical—so very different from Kate.

Soon I arose and went to my room, and kneeling, I poured my great grief into the pitying ear of the loving Heavenly Father. I earnestly entreated him to spare the life of my dear sister; and peace and strength came over my soul. I was sure my petition would be granted.

Another day wore away. In the meantime Kate had become more quiet and her incoherent ravings had subsided into low moans.

When the doctor came, he placed his fingers upon her wrist, and then said hopefully:

"The pulse is slower. There is an improvement."

Very gradually Kate began to recover. It was many weeks before she could leave her room, and not till Winter came was she able to be around as before. My joy at her convalescence had no limits, and I fervently thanked God for the continuance of her life.

One bright Sunday morning I dressed for church. I knew after the services a collection was to be taken for the poor, and a purpose was in my heart. In a little rosewood box I had a sum of money which I had carefully saved.

There was a half dollar which father gave me after my big back tooth was pulled. Another half-dollar Aunt Sallie gave for getting so many "credits" at school, to "encourage me." Then there was a tiny gold piece Uncle Peter sent me, just after Rover died, "to help lighten the blow," and it did. Besides, there were several small silver pieces of less value, and a few pennies, amounting in all to nearly four dollars.

The clasp to my pocket-book was broken, so I tied the money into one corner of my handkerchief, and put it into my pocket, and then walked with my parents to church. When the sermon was over, Rev. Mr. Brooks announced that a collection would be taken up for the poor, and earnestly urged liberal contributions. Then Mr. Peters and Deacon Holbrook took long-handled boxes, and proceeded to pass them around to the people.

As Mr. Peters approached our pew, I pulled out my handkerchief, and with quick, nervous fingers tried to untie the knot; but it would not yield. Mr. Peters held the box before father, who put in a bill, and was going on.

"Stop, stop! I've something to put in," I whispered in a flurry of excitement, loud enough to be heard by the occupants of a dozen pews.

Mr. Peters took a step back, and held the box out to me. The knot slipped and untied, and in an instant the entire contents of my handkerchief, gold, silver pieces, and pennies, were emptied into it—as much as my chubby hand could hold. Father saw this unexpected act with a surprised, puzzled eye, and a partial smile flitted over his lips as he looked upon my satisfied face. That evening, when the family were sitting in the parlor at twilight, father inquired, smilingly:

"Ruth, how did it happen you put so much money in the contribution box? You gave almost as much as I did."

"I gave it to please God. It was my thank-offering for sparing Kate's life," I answered quietly.

"Dear child; you have taught me a lesson," and he drew me fondly to him and kissed me.

Kate's eyes were moist, and mother said, looking tenderly toward me:

"Husband, let us follow Ruth's ex-

ample, and show our gratitude to the Lord for restoring our daughter, by giving with a free hand to the needy out of our abundance."

The following week a score of destitute struggling families were made richer and happier by the supply of clothes, provisions and fuel which my parents generously distributed among them according to their necessities.

Many years have come and gone since then. Kate's girlhood dream of fame has not been realized. She was never able to endure severe mental labor after that dreadful illness, and it cost her many bitter tears to be forced to abandon all thought of authorship.

Then God gave her a different mission in life. She is the wife of a Western clergyman, occupying a high social position, and the influence of her many gifts and graces is widely felt. Strangely our lives are revolutionized.

I, Ruth Halley, neither brilliant nor poetical, and dull of learning in childhood, now write simple, practical pieces for magazines and papers. My parents have become reduced in property, and it is my highest pleasure to help them with my earnings; and I am sure they now love me as well as my more gifted sister Kate.

My story is told. Parents and teachers, heed its warning. Overtaxation of mind has ruined the health and caused the death of thousands. Restrain, and not stimulate, the young who manifest precocity of intellect.—*Central Christian Advocate*.

POST-MORTEM LOVE.

Why is it that so many people keep all their pleasant thoughts and kind words about a man bottled and sealed up until he is dead, when they come and break the bottle over his coffin, and bathe his shroud in fragrance? Many a man goes through life with scarcely one bright, cheering, encouraging, helpful word. He toils hard and in lowly obscurity. He gives out his life freely and unstintingly for others. I remember such a man. He was not brilliant; he was not great; but he was faithful. He had many things to discourage him. Troubles thickened about his life. He was misrepresented and misunderstood. Every body believed that he was a good man, but no one ever said a pleasant or kindly thing about him. He never heard a compliment, scarcely ever a good wish. No one ever took any pains to encourage him, to strengthen his feeble knees, to lighten his burden, or to lift up his heart by a gentle deed of love, or by a cheerful word. He was neglected. Unkind things were often said of him.

I stood at his coffin, and then there were many tongues to speak his praise. There was not a breath of aspersion in the air. Men spoke of self-denials—of his work among the poor, and of his good qualities, of his quietness, his modesty, his humility, his pureness of heart, his faith and prayer. There were many who spoke indignantly of the charges that falsehood had forged against him in past years, and the treatment he had received. There were enough kind things said during the two or three days that he lay in his coffin, and while the company stood around his open grave, to have blessed him and made him happy all his fifty years, and to have thrown sweetness and joy about his soul during all his painful and weary journey. There was enough sunshine wasted about the black coffin and dark grave to have made his whole life-path bright as clearest day; but his ears were closed then, and could not hear a word that was spoken. His heart was still then and could not be thrilled by the grateful sounds. He cared nothing then for the sweet flowers that were piled upon his coffin. The love blossomed out too late; the kindness came when the life could not receive its blessing.

But meantime there is a great host of