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[15- at the end of the Year

THE CITY CLERK.

BY MISS C. M. KIDWICK.

"A sister's love! I dwell upon the theme—
The only love on earth to which the earth
Has given no taint of self-regarding care."

It is about the middle of November—a bright soft day, when the genial spirit of the year looks back with one of his farewell smiles. His warm breath has spread a silver haze over the rugged hillsides. The mountains are shining—the dried leaves, bitten off by the frost, turn round and round, and drop without a sound. A rather narrow, brisk stream runs rapidly, descending as it goes, till it reaches the rear of a neat one-story house, where, being set back by a dam below, it seems like a plate of burnished steel from which a soft vapor is rising. Around its edges is a thin coating of ice, indicating the cold of the preceding night. The house stands on the declivity of a hill, that slopes gradually from the road, a hundred yards from it, with one end to the river, the other to the road, fronting south. Behind it is a little garden patch, which in its adversity, shows signs of being cared for and loved; some plants being tied up, and a few covered with old boxes and barrels. There are some other signs of refinement, not too common about the humble dwellings of our country; roses trained about the low door, and port bushes so nicely fitted around the old windows that they seem to have come to stay there of their own accord. Neatness, that good angel of an humble home, keeping all right with her ever-rustling wings, hovers round this pretty dwelling. A small woodpile is laid up, as if by mathematical rule. No litter of any kind is anywhere to be seen and one wonders what the splendid cock with his pedestrian haireen can find to make them pick up so busily around the sunny doorway.

It is but nine o'clock, and morning at that hour had hardly dawned on luxurious dwellers in great houses; but here how much of the daily work of life has been accomplished. A pale, and in common parlance, "unfortunate" man, is sitting bolt upright in an easy chair, near a cheerful fire, his right arm and leg tucked under his head, his face, a woman with a mild, thoughtful face, sits near the window, making a vest and with the implements of tailoring about her. With every stitch, and without huddling it, and addressing him in such language as country wives are accustomed to use, she says, "Do you find your paper interesting, father?" "Is it not almost time for father's drops?" and the answer is "Yes," or "No," as may be, but always on a cheerful tone, which, coming from that poor mutilated figure, is startling like a light suddenly kindled in darkness. A little lass is putting the last touches to the morning's house work. She has cleared away the breakfast, skimmed the milk, "swept up," and "mopped up," and is ready to sit down by her mother to finish off the work that always accumulates for Saturday. Both father's and mother's eyes often turn to her, and who would not love to look on a face so beaming with intelligence, so fresh and cheerful? Never were there prettier or brighter lips, or more beautiful teeth, or in a palace or cottage, a more clarifying smile, than little Ruth Hathaway's. Perhaps it derived this quality from a cast of sadness on her brow; it was a shadow on a rose. There it fell when her father was brought home from his new factory with the flesh torn from his arm and leg, and there it remained indelible. As to the rest, the face is pretty and pleasing, but not beautiful; her eyes are rather small and greyish; her complexion, clear and pure, is not brilliant. Her hair not only does not curl, and is neither auburn, chestnut, nor raven, but a very common brown, and only remarkable for the neatness with which she arranges it on her very well-shaped head. Ruth is said to be the image of her father, and she rather prides herself on this resemblance.

Ralph Hathaway is reckoned by common observers, as we have said, "an unfortunate man"; but could any amount of ill luck or calamity make that epithet fitting him whose temperament is so cheerful that his sun will break through the heaviest clouds? His heart is a never intermitting fountain of love to God, and peace and good will to man. Ruth, what are you listening for? asked the father; I hear nothing but the factory. Nor I, father; I wish we did not always hear that—it.

It puts you in mind of your father's accident, but I know, Ruth, and so it does me, but then it puts me off thinking how my life was spared, and how I should never have known what a good woman mother is, but for that—his not every wife that would care for such a poor rack as I am.

O, father! exclaimed both mother and child.

Well, then, it is not every woman that would give up the thoughts of being the wife of a rich agent for a company, move out of a nice new house, and stretch, stitch from morning to night to support her family. Who has a right to be cheerful, if I have not? I can tell you there's times when the factory makes my thoughts go straight up.

Our friend Hathaway's voice was rather choked; he cleared it, and added:

But what were you listening to, Ruthy dear?

"Why, father, I was listening for the railroad whistle; we always hear it, you know, when the wind is west."

Why, I heard it, Ruth, when you were setting up the dishes?

O, did you, father? then Charlie's letter is near the post office by this time.

Don't be too sure, my child.

I can't help being sure mother. Charlie never fails to write when he says he will, and this letter is to tell us whether he can come to thanksgiving, and its only twelve days to that, and I shall be just sixteen that day.

Yes, yes, Ruthy, said her father, come what may, thanksgiving day will always be thanksgiving to us.

O, there's Col. Miles! exclaimed Ruth, and she rushed to the door, not, however, without giving her father a brush of a kiss as she passed him.

Col. Miles! she shouted, can't you please stop at the post office, and bring our letter from Charlie? The colonel was not going to the post office, but his turning-off place was near it, and it was the work of two minutes for Ruth to beg a seat in his little wagon, and to get her mother's leave to go herself to the post office, to take the chance of a two miles' walk home, if she did not get a cab, and above all to obtain leave to open the letter herself, as so on as received, to whichever member of the family it might be addressed.

Three hours passed away, when Anthony, a colored man, living at Mr. Gardner's in the village, brought Mrs. Hathaway a letter from Ruth. It enclosed one from Charlie. On Ruth's letter was written in large characters, "Read this first," and the mother read as follows:

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER—Don't feel too bad. I shall be on my way to New York when you get this. Miss Emma, Gardner lent me ten dollars and what clothes I shall want. Father can't go, and you can't leave father, mother, and I—I can't stay. Father, you will keep up mother's spirits, won't you? I know it will all come right.

P. S. Mr. Gardner has gone to Boston, so Miss Emma and I have had to go to our usual work. I would not tell any one else for the world.

Mrs. Hathaway, pale and trembling, gave this letter to her husband, while she read that from her son Charlie.

Dear Father and Mother, and Ruth—I have got into some trouble. I ask of you all not to feel anxious or distressed. I expect (expect was erased and hope substituted) to get out well, but if I don't, I shall keep right side up, as father would say. Now, be calm, mother, dear. Just before we looked up last night, I observed a stranger come into the shop, the doors were closed, and all the clerks called into the middle of the shop, away from the counters. Otis Jackson was standing close to me at the time we were spoken to. I heard him matter—don't, but I had not the least thought of what was coming. Mr. Wilson stood on one side of the stranger, Mr. Brown the other. Mr. Brown spoke; we have been missing, says he, fine goods for the last month; a shawl was taken last week—two pairs of costly lace, and of the five dollar pocket handkerchiefs are gone to-day. We have a policeman here, and you must all be searched. One of you must be guilty. I am sorry for the innocent, but no disgrace will rest upon them—do your duty, Ruston. The policeman began the search. Some of our young men laughed and joked; I could not, I was afraid it would prove to be Otis. He was the fourth searched; nothing was found on him. My turn came next; the things were found in my coat pocket, stop of my handkerchief, and everything, as if they had just been put there. How the truth is to be found out I don't know, but I feel as if it would. All I ask is, that father will keep up mother's spirits; and dear Ruth, only think how you would all feel if I had taken the things. I shall write daily, so don't be anxious. Ever, your loving son and brother, CHARLES.

P. S. Direct to me, "Care of Robert Henshaw," he is my friend among the clerks. There was a dead silence in that home of the Hathaways, till the father, breaking up into something between a cry and a laugh, said,

Mother, Charlie is an honest boy, and well trained, and that should be comfort enough; How often you have said to me, Charlie never told a lie in his life.

He never did, he never will, sobbed out the poor mother.

Come here, mother—kneel down here—we'll trust him with our Father and his Father; we'll commit the case to Him, and then we shall feel better; and the still small voice of their prayer arose, and God was there.

The next morning at nine o'clock, Ruth Hathaway disembarked from a Hudson steamer on a New York wharf, dirty, crowded and noisy enough to have confounded a head and heart less clear and strong of purpose than hers. She had enquired of the captain the way to Canal street, where Brown and Wil-

son's shop is, and with her little sack containing her change of clothes, in her hand, she walked straight up Liberty Street, to Broadway.

Her quick step had caught the eye of an omnibus driver who beckoned to her and she nodded affirmatively, jumped into the coach, thinking how very kind it was in him to give her a ride! She asked a man one of four fellow passengers, to tell her when she got to Canal street; accordingly the man pulled the strap, the coach stopped, and with her habitual impetuous movement, she jumped out and dropping a little courtesy to the driver, said, Thank you, sir. He, fancying she was tricking him, called out, That's cool! Stop that hussey! She dodged her fare! An impediment of vehicles had accumulated the passengers on the sidewalk at the corner of Canal street. Every eye was turned on our poor little stranger. She stopped, turned round and in a voice that indicated her honest perplexity, asked, What does he mean? He means to be paid, my child, said an elderly gentleman, who was struck with the simplicity of Ruth's manner; and himself very generously gave the fare to the vociferous driver. Ruth now comprehended her mistake, and repaying the expense, she said with characteristic good sense I am a stranger in New York, or I should have known better. He invited me to ride with him, and the people where I live often give rides to strangers.

Her friend again smiled at her simplicity, told her to keep a good look out now she had come to the city, and they parted; he thinking her sweet smile might pay her fare, and she to look for the sign of Brown, Wilson & Co., which she soon found and entered the shop. It was thronged with eager buyers and civil clerks, intent on their sales. She looked up and down the long counters, all were unknown to her, till at the extremity of one she saw Otis Jackson. His eye met hers and instantly fell; she saw in that glance he had recognised her. He was her townsman, and a schoolmate of her brother, two years older than Charles Hathaway. Ruth went to the end of the counter where he stood and said, Otis! Her voice was low, but had a heart-sound; it seemed to come as it indeed did, from another world than that vanity fair that surrounded her. Ladies examining faces, paused to look at her, and one or two of the clerks turned their eyes to Otis Jackson, expecting him to answer, but he averted his eye, and went to the extremity of the shop to receive some new customers. Is Mr. Henshaw here. She was civilly answered, yes, and Henshaw was summoned. Where is my brother? she said. There were tears in her voice, though none in her eyes. It was rather an indefinite enquiry from a total stranger; but whether it was her family resemblance to her brother, or the tone of the voice supplying all the words wanted, Henshaw was sure the inquiry was for Hathaway, and coming from behind the counter, before he replied, said in a low voice to Ruth,

You have heard of your brother's misfortune?

Yes, where is he?

Why—he you cannot see him immediately; if you will tell me where you are staying I will try to get leave to come to you in the course of the day, and go with you to see him.

Oh, I must go now. I must stay where he is, I have no other place.

Henshaw called out Mr. Brown, who are you talking to, there?

Henshaw went close to him and explained. A pretty business, said the sturdy master; look she is lingering over the laces; they are birds of a feather, brother and sister.

Poor Ruth, had unconsciously placed her hand on the box of laces.

Go to your own business, Henshaw, behind the counter, added Brown; and then striding up to Ruth, and taking her by the arm, with a mixture of savageness and familiarity, he said,

Walk out my shop or I will send you to the police-office.

Tell me first where my brother is?

Where all thieves should be—he is in the Tombs.

The tombs! where are the tombs?

Go out and ask along the street—you'll soon find out.

Ruth went forth with a burning heart—She walked rapidly a few steps from the hateful shop, and then stopped confused and uncertain what to do. She looked up and down the street, and in the faces of the passers by, No one heeded her, while it seemed to her that all the world should know what she felt and what she wanted. She was proceeding slowly when suddenly a finger touched her on the shoulder, and a low voice spoke kindly to her. It was Henshaw's. His face was agitated and highly coloured, and hardly seemed the same serene, mild countenance, she had first addressed.

I will go with you now, he said, to see your brother.

Oh, can you? how kind you are.

How much this kindness had cost Henshaw, Ruth little dreamed. On her leaving the shop he had not been able to repress the expression of his indignation at Brown's in-

humanity. Brown was abashed. Henshaw was not so abashed, and declared his intention of attending the little girl immediately to her brother. Brown told him if he then, left the shop never again to enter it.

Is it far sir, asked Ruth, to that place?

No; a very short distance.

I suppose, sir it is a—prison?

Yes a house of detention, where persons are confined to await their trial.

Then Charles is not yet tried? he is not yet condemned, is he?

No; not yet.

Not yet, struck like a polling bell on Ruth's heart.

Your brother resumed Henshaw, wrote to you the circumstances? He told you of course, that he was not guilty?

No; he did not say that.

He did not! exclaimed Henshaw, in an alarmed tone.

No sir; why should he? she asked speaking for the first time with an assured voice. You would not ask such a question if you knew Charles, Mr. Henshaw.

I do know him, and I feel a confidence in his integrity; but—

But what? oh, do speak out.

I only hesitated, because I cannot bear to distress you. I fear we shall have difficulty in proving your brother's innocence; but we will not talk about it now. You have never been inside of a prison, and you must try and keep up good resolution.

Ruth did try, but when she saw that huge stern edifice, called the Tombs—when the massive locks were turned to admit her—and when the keeper having been requested by Henshaw to permit the young person with whom she came to see Charles Hathaway, scarcely noticing her, led them along the corridors, with that hardened indifference which use gives, her heart sunk and her feet moved draggingly.

They were intercepted and impeded by a party visiting the prison from curiosity. It consisted of two or three elderly people, two very young ladies from the country, full of pleasing excitement from being for the first time within prison walls—the scene to their imaginations of so much possible romance—and their cousin, a young city lawyer, who acted exponent of the scene.

Babe, the pirate, said he to them, is in that cell, No. 51.

That horrid wretch we read the account of in the newspaper? How I should to see him!

There is still a more curious monster, cousin Jane, in No. 53—the German who burned his wife to death.

Oh, horrors! And who can that be between them, No. 52.

I don't know; somebody worse than either I suppose. Who is it, Mr. Farran?

I don't know his name; a lad committed for stealing.

Let us pass, if you please, ladies, said Ruth's conductor.

Our amateur visitors stared at Ruth. One said touching her cousin's arm.

Oh, Henry, did you ever see anything so pale as that poor girl? Mercy! Do you think she is going to be shut up here?

No, that is impossible. What innocence, sweetness and misery!

Ruth's conductor was now unbolting the door of No. 52. The youngest of the young ladies impelled by irresistible curiosity, followed close enough to see, when the door was opened, a handsome youth, pale, haggard and sorrowful bending over a sheet of paper on which he was intently writing. She could not see that the paper was wet with his tears. Ruth darted into the cell; the keeper shut the door, and rebolting it, said to Henshaw, cooly,

You may call me when she is ready to come out.

Henshaw, walking to and fro, unoccupied in the corridor, presented too tempting an opportunity to gratify the young ladies' curiosity; and their cousin being put up to asking some questions, they got possession of Charles' story, and what was far more important, Henshaw found that the enquirer was Henry Sandly a young lawyer, whose very clever management of a criminal case, had a few weeks before, been much talked of in the city.

Henshaw gave him a retaining fee for his friend on the spot, and Sandly engaged to get the trial put off till testimonials of Charles Hathaway's good character could be obtained from the country. On these documents, and on the testimony of his fellow clerks, he said they must found all their hopes of clearing him; at the same time he confessed the chance was small, against the overwhelming fact of the stolen goods into Hathaway's pocket.

Henshaw hesitated, and only said in reply that there was not a clerk in the shop he should not have sooner suspected than Hathaway. Henshaw was a man of strict principles. He did suspect, he had all along suspected—Otis Jackson, but he was too scrupulous to run the risk of wronging him by the expression of suspicions that had no proof whatever.

After Charles's first moment of surprise at

Ruth's appearance—after the first burst of their young hearts—and after Ruth had sat for a few moments on his pallet, beside him, with her arms linked around his neck, silent and shivering with emotions, he said, "Now, Ruthy we must not give way so; I hear it very well only when I sit down to write home; and you, will feel, knocks me up. Mother, and you get here, Ruth, so soon? How did mother bear it? What did father say? Ruth told her short story, and concluded by saying To-morrow Charlie we shall certainly have a letter from them."

We! you cannot stay here Ruth. Even if you had any place to stay, you know father and mother want you a great deal more than I do.

I can stay here Charlie, and I shall—and they would choose it—and there's an end of it. But Ruth, you don't know what a place this is; nor what New York is for an unprotected girl.

Nonsense, Charlie! I can protect myself. Where can you sleep?

Sleep? I don't feel much like sleeping; but I can lie here on the floor, or I can get that man to lock me up in some empty cell, like this. I can do anything but go away and leave you and that I will not do.

There was a knock at the door, the bolts were turned, and Henshaw told Charles that a lawyer was waiting to speak to him.

Let him wait one minute, said Ruth, and taking from her little sack a bottle of cologne comb and brush, provided by Miss Emma Gardner, she smoothed her brother's tangled locks, and restored to his sweet countenance, its habitual aspect. There now, you look like our own Charlie, she said.

Sandley entered, and he did not leave the cell without being thoroughly convinced that Charles was innocent, and nearly as well convinced that they should not be able to prove his innocence; and so impressed with the love of the brother and sister, that he resolved to strain every nerve in their behalf. He comforted Charles by assuring him that he knew the matron of the prison—that she was a humane woman—that he would engage her to furnish her sister a bed in her room, and see that Miss Ruth had every facility in going to and from her brother's cell.

Please tell them, said Ruth, I will only trouble them twice a day. I shall come to Charles in the morning, and go away in the evening.

(To be continued.)

The electric Telegraph between Quebec has been put in operation, but, owing to the atrocious propensities of the proprietors, the anticipated beneficial results have not been fully realized. It appears that the charges for telegraphic communication were so enormously high, that the Editors of the Quebec papers found it expedient to meet together, on the 7th inst. when the Hon. John Neilson presided, and it was resolved that the Quebec Newspapers should publish no intelligence received by the Telegraph until some more satisfactory arrangement be made.

Eloquence.—The following touch of the sublime was delivered, we think, before a court of justice in Pennsylvania.

Your honor sits high upon the adorable seat of justice, like the Asiatic rock of Gibraltar, while the eternal streams of justice, like the cadaverous clouds of the valley flow meandering at your extended feet.

Now mark the difference of the style of the above and the following 'burst of eloquence' uttered at a Debating society in the western part of this State.

Mr. President, I ain't going to skate up a rainbow, and follow the gentleman among the stars to gaze at 'Weenies.' My opponent is like a sow wallowing in the mire—he don't know as much as a pig, and always did, I ain't got any more to say.

Nor, we either.—[Philadelphia Galaxy.

FULFILLING THEIR PROMISE.—A few years ago, a number of Texans were taken prisoners in Mexico, carried to the capital and made to work upon the streets. One of these laborers was to rear a column on which Santa Anna's greatness was inscribed, with the addition that the work was done by prisoners taken in the Texan war. The Texans employed on this degrading task, made a vow at the time that if ever war was carried into Mexico, this work should be destroyed. We see by letters published from Mexico, that their pledge has been redeemed. After the late battles, and the Mexicans were driven in disgrace to their city, the Texans, formerly prisoners, went in a body to the monument removed, every stone and broke them into pieces.

PERNICIOUS LITERATURE.—You are shocked when you think of the destruction which the mental gifts of a conqueror can bring upon the world. But have you ever represented to yourself the destruction which is wrought upon the world in high endowments, of writers, who follow the impulse of ambition, and are too easily betrayed to serve a lie? The one only lays waste houses, the other ruins hearts; the one destroys life, the other pains faith and love.