

The Shepherd Psalm.

BY REV. SIR HENRY W. BAKER.

The king of love my shepherd is,
Whose goodness falleth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
And he is mine for ever.

Where streams of living water flow,
My ransomed soul he leadeth;
And where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish, oft I strayed,
But yet in love he sought me,
And on his shoulder gently laid,
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight,
Thy unction grace bestoweth;
And, oh, what transport of delight
From thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness falleth never,
Good Shepherd! may I sing thy praise
Within thy house for ever.

Slaying the Dragon.

BY MRS. D. O. CLARK.

CHAPTER IX.

AN UNEXPECTED PROPOSAL.

"Tis true, that we are in great danger. The greater therefore should our courage be."—Shakespeare.

Judge Seabury expected that when he allied himself with the proud Archer family his happiness would be complete and contentment would fold her wings and abide with him. Clara Archer was haughty, wilful and selfish to the heart's core. She married from expediency, not from love. A miserable home was the natural consequence. The Judge spent most of his time in his office, and left the household to run according to the dictum of the mistress. Only in this way could open warfare be avoided, and the Judge disliked "scenes," as what man does not?

One afternoon Mr. Felton came into the library to have a talk with the Judge about Ralph.

"The child needs a companion," said the ex-minister. "It is not a good plan to bring up children alone. Ralph does not take the interest in his studies that he would if there was some one sharing them. He is very backward, very!" and Mr. Felton shook his head dubiously. "Now there's the boy Mrs. Dow adopted. He's not as old as Ralph, about five now, I should say. Probably Mrs. Dow would be delighted to have some one take the boy, as she is not in circumstances sufficient to warrant her assuming this extra burden for any length of time. What do you say to taking this boy and educating him with Ralph?"

The Judge looked thoughtful, but made no reply.

"It would be a very benevolent thing to do, besides being an advantage to your son," pursued the minister, touching his brother-in-law in his weak point. Nothing so pleased the Judge as to have people say, "Oh, what a benevolent man!" He prided himself on giving large sums to sundry charitable and philanthropic objects. Mr. Felton had touched the right chord.

"Yes, yes, I think you're right," he said. "I will go at once and see the woman. There is no doubt but what she will be glad to get rid of the boy. Am glad you spoke to me about it."

Many attempts had been made by Mr. Strong and others to find out the relatives of the little waif, but in vain. The circumstances of the shipwreck, and the recovery of the child were duly advertised, but no one appeared to claim kinship. As over a year had passed and no light was received on the subject, Phoebe became convinced that God had sent this child to be a son to her in the place of the one whom she mourned as lost. She took him into her heart with a tenderness which surprised herself, and gave the boy her name. Maurice Dow became, from this time, a settled fact in the community.

Not long after taking the waif to her home, Phoebe made an unpleasant discovery. As she was coming from an adjoining wood lot with a large bundle of sticks on her arm, she saw Peter MacDuff a little way ahead, examining something which was hidden behind a large rock. Maurice was walking to meet his foster-mother, when he came across

Peter. With a child's curiosity, he stopped to watch the man. MacDuff rose suddenly from his stooping posture, and meeting the innocent eyes of the child fixed on him wonderingly, he uttered a terrible oath, and lifted his hand as though he would strike the boy.

"Out o' my sight, yer good fur nuthin' brat! What yer gapin' at me fur?" The child uttered a frightened cry and ran to Phoebe.

"Be careful, MacDuff, how you frighten one of the Lord's little ones," said the woman sternly. "It is evident you are drinking too much. Can you not learn a lesson from poor Rast's death and shun the same fate? Take heed before it is too late, and the dragon has you so fast in his clutches that you cannot escape."

The surly fisherman cowered at these searching words and muttered a sort of an apology. There was something in his manner which mystified Phoebe. "The man is going mad with drink," she thought. "But why should he dislike Maurice? The child certainly has done him no harm. His face revealed a half-terrified, half-defiant look as he saw the lad. Singular! Hereafter I must keep my eyes open."

The day was full of surprises. As Mrs. Dow sat knitting a sock for Maurice and planning for his future, a shadow darkened her doorway, and looking up, she saw, to her great surprise, Judge Seabury. As it was the first time he had visited her humble cottage, it was no wonder that the widow was a trifle disturbed.

"Good afternoon, my good woman. Pray keep your sitting. No, I do not care for the rocker, I sit very comfortably by the door. Doubtless you are surprised at my call."

Phoebe nodded assent. "Ahem; well, my call is a trifle unusual, for with all my duties I have very little time for becoming acquainted with my workmen at the Cove." He stopped, and then glanced about the room, as though in search of something.

"By the way, Mrs. Dow, where is the little waif who created such a sensation in these parts some months ago?"

"Maurice is out with Tom Kinmon's girls. They came to take him to the beach. It is about time they were returning. There they come now."

Over the hill and down the footpath which lay between the rocks came the children. Their shouts of merry laughter floated into the cottage, and caused a sigh to escape from Judge Seabury. "How happy these simple-hearted fishermen are," he thought. "They get more enjoyment out of life than I. What makes the difference?"

Ah, my learned Judge, happiness is from within, not without. A conscience void of offence toward God will prove a source of perennial enjoyment to the possessor.

The Kinmon girls shrank back as they caught a glimpse of Phoebe's distinguished visitor, and ran away, leaving the boy standing in the middle of the kitchen floor. He made a pretty picture as he stood there, in the unconscious grace of childhood. His round, rosy face was lighted up by a pair of sparkling black eyes. His dark curls were pushed away from a noble forehead, and his torn straw hat was dangling from one little brown hand. In the other were his shoes and stockings. Evidently he had been playing in the sand.

"Come here, my brave little man," said the Judge, holding out his hand. The child looked earnestly at him a moment, and then ran to Phoebe. A frown flitted across the gentleman's face.

"You must excuse the child's actions, sir," said the widow. "Maurice was frightened only this morning by one of the fishermen. I expect it will make him shy of strangers for a long time. Come, Maurice, go to the gentleman." But the little face was closely hidden in the folds of Phoebe's dress, and no persuasion could induce him to raise it.

"The object of my visit, Mrs. Dow," said the Judge, clearing his throat. "was to tell you that I am seeking a companion for my son. Mr. Felton recommended your adopted child. I have come, therefore, to offer this waif a good home and superior advantages. I do not mean that I shall adopt Maurice, for his blood may be tainted, for all we know, and the name of Seabury cannot be linked with one of plebeian stock. I thought that as your circumstances were not of the best, you would be glad to be relieved of your charge. How does the matter strike you?"

Phoebe sat like one stunned. Then, as she realized what Judge Seabury had been saying, she groaned, and covered her face with her hands.

"My good woman," said the gentleman, "I perceive that my proposal comes unexpectedly, therefore I will not press you for an answer. Take plenty of time

to consider the matter, and then let me know your decision."

The echo of retreating footsteps fell upon Phoebe's ear, but she heeded them not. The little clock on the shelf ticked loudly, as it measured the fleeting moments, but the busy fingers for once were idly crossed upon her knees. Even the ceaseless prattle of Maurice fell upon deaf ears. For Phoebe was settling a question which touched the deepest springs of her nature. Should she relinquish the little orphan to the care of Judge Seabury? Did she not love the child better than life? Had she not taken a mother's place, and was he not her own? For a long time she battled with these selfish feelings; then, with a prayer to God for help, she tried to look at the matter impartially. What would the child gain by going to the Seabury mansion? He would secure position, wealth, influential friends and superior educational advantages. He would undoubtedly be qualified to take a position in life which he might never attain if reared in humble circumstances. So much for his side of the question. But when the thought came to her that the Judge was a moderate drinker, and that wine was a daily visitor upon the elegant dining-table, she realized that the child had also much to lose by exchanging homes. He might lose his spotless character, his soul, eternal life. Could she give her consent to this flattering offer? No! A thousand times, no! She would work her fingers to the bone before she would see that innocent child thrust into the dragon's clutches.

The warm pressure of a child's arms about her neck brought her thoughts to the present moment. Clapping the boy to her heart, she cried:

"They shall never take my precious lamb from me! God has given him to me in trust, and he shall be trained to serve his Maker."

Although Phoebe had decided the question in her own mind, she wished the advice of some trusted friend. She sought the counsel of Pastor Strong, and a heavy load was lifted from her heart when he heartily approved her decision.

"Judge Seabury's home is a dangerous place to bring up a boy, and Mr. Felton is a dangerous teacher for a boy to imitate. If the avenues to sin are not closed to protect the Judge's son, think you that the orphan child will fare any better? Mr. Felton is a Christian man, I sincerely believe, but on the temperance question he is terribly mistaken. We have had several hot discussions on the subject, and I fear Mr. Felton thinks me obstinate because I will not let the mooted subject rest just where he does. I pray, Mrs. Dow, that you may say some word to the Judge and the minister which shall lead both to see their error in tolerating intemperance."

Phoebe left the parsonage with a light heart, conscious that she had the support of one for whom she entertained the most profound respect and reverence. She was ready to face the displeasure even of a Judge or an ex-minister.

Judge Seabury's library was an inviting place to one who had been battling the storm of wind and rain. The heavy crimson curtains were drawn close about the windows and a bright fire glowed in the grate. That worthy gentleman was pacing back and forth, his head bowed upon his breast, apparently lost in deep thought. Near him sat Mr. Felton, writing letters. The Judge came forward graciously to meet Mrs. Dow as she was ushered into his presence. Phoebe waited for no preliminary remarks, but came at once to business.

"I have come, Judge Seabury, to give you my decision in regard to relinquishing Maurice. After looking at the matter from all sides, and giving it a prayerful consideration, it has seemed best for me to decline your kind offer. I have come to-night to give you my final answer."

"Madam, your reasons," said the Judge, icily.

"In the first place, sir, I desire to have this child trained to be a staunch temperance man. In the second place, I love the child too well to give him away; these are the main reasons why I wish to retain the boy under my humble roof."

The Judge rose in a towering passion. "What do you mean to insinuate by your words, woman? Am I not a temperance man? Cannot I instil temperance principles into this child. I should like to know?"

"No, sir, not while you keep your wine-cellar. Having seen all that I have of intemperance, I am convinced that nothing short of total abstinence will save the coming generation. I dare not place this boy in your home, for fear he may become one of the dragon's subjects."

"Very complimentary, I must say," sneered Mr. Felton, looking up from his sheet of paper. "Pray, my good woman,

to which of us does your remark refer?" Phoebe paid no attention to the interruption.

"This is an expression which I heard first from my mother's lips, in reference to the terrible curse of intemperance. This great dragon walketh about our little town, seeking whom he may devour. My home is humble, and my means scanty, but this child will never see or taste any intoxicating liquors under my roof. God helping me, he shall learn to hate the accursed stuff, and be stimulated to labour for those who have succumbed to the insidious enemy. I beg to be excused if I have offended you. You know, full well, that I have good reason for feeling strongly on the subject."

"I have no patience with you temperance fanatics," replied the Judge, disregarding her closing words. "You will put aside this child's future prosperity, deprive him of superior educational advantages, for the sake of a quibble on the temperance question. Bah! I have no patience with such a procedure."

"You surely do not intend to decline this munificent offer?" said Mr. Felton, in his impressive way.

"Most certainly I do," replied Phoebe, without flinching. Then turning to Judge Seabury, she said: "Sir, you are proud of the Seabury name, take care that your son does not disgrace that name by linking it with that of a drunkard. Banish your wine cellar. Remove temptation from before your family and before the young people of this place. Throw your great influence on the side of temperance. For God's sake, for your boy's sake, do this!"

Before the astonished man could reply, Mrs. Dow had faced the ex-minister.

"Reverend sir, may God forgive you for being a stumbling-block in the way of temperance progress in Fairport. May he convince you of your error one day—but, oh, good sir, may you never suffer as I have." Phoebe paused, overcome by her emotions.

"Woman," said the Judge, angrily "do you dare to dictate what I shall or shall not do? I do not know to what you refer by your insinuations. You had better reserve such for the fishermen who make hogsheads of themselves and fill them with poor rum. This is the outcome of such fanatical nonsense as Parson Strong preaches. He has got to stop it, or he will be asked to send in his resignation. When it gets to this, that one is insulted in his own house by a temperance bigot, it is time something was done. Don't you agree with me, Phineas?"

"Most certainly I do," replied Mr. Felton, a bright spot glowing on either cheek. "Strong is carrying this thing too far. I have told him so repeatedly, but he is young and headstrong, and thinks the old pastor is terribly behind the times. For my part I am sick of the word 'Reform.' These temperance fanatics are going from house to house, lighting their torches at every fireside."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mrs. Dow.

"Go," cried Judge Seabury, to Phoebe, forgetting all courtesy in his anger. "Go, keep the outcast child, if you will, but vacate the house you live in. I will have no tenant who dares thwart my will. Go, but beg a shelter at the house of the ranting minister who advocates your notions. Go, but never darken my doors again."

Mrs. Dow was only too glad to leave the Seabury mansion. Filled with anxiety for her beloved pastor's welfare, she stopped at the parsonage and told him what had been said.

"You will work cautiously, will you not?" she entreated. "I fear these men will brew mischief in this place. They make excellent friends, but deadly enemies."

"Do you remember the words which I quoted from the master-poet, only last Sunday?" he asked, with a slight smile. "'Tis true that we are in great danger. The greater therefore should our courage be. Be assured, Mrs. Dow, that I shall do nothing rashly, and many thanks for your timely warning. I will be on my guard."

(To be continued.)

True Love to One's Neighbour.

Who is thy neighbour? He whom thou Hast power to aid or bless; Whose scolding heart or burning brow Thy soothing hand may press.

Thy neighbour? 'Tis the fainting poor, Whose eyes with want is dim, O enter thou his humble door, With aid and peace for him.

Thy neighbour? He who drinks the cup When sorrow drowns the brim! With words of high, sustaining hope, Go thou and comfort him.