

In my hand; I had broken the rind, and was holding it to the boy's lips, squeezing the juice, which he sucked and swallowed eagerly. At length his thirst seemed assuaged, and he desisted. And then he stretched out his thin, thin arm, and took me by the hand. 'Sir, sir,' he whispered, "Inasmuch as ye have done it—unto the least—of these my brethren—ye have done it unto me;—you know who says so, don't you?" And a strange, lovely, unearthly smile settled on his lips.

'My poor boy, yes,' I said, looking at him with astonishment, and pressing softly his withered, faded hand.

'Not poor, not poor!' he repeated. 'He won't let me be poor: He won't indeed—'

'Since He is mine and I am His,
What can I want besides?'

It was very wonderful, I thought, as I listened to the simple outpourings of the soul of that dying boy. How many years was it since, in that wretched garret, I had heard the same words from the lips of Fanny Grey; and now this same child-like confidence in the Good Shepherd, which had helped her to rise above her life trials, was supporting one, as young as she, in the prospect of death.

I repeat,—I thought this; but I asked, as a stranger might, 'What do you mean, my boy—I will not call you 'poor' again—but what do you mean by saying 'Since He is mine and I am His?'

He looked wistfully in my face, and apparently he was satisfied with the examination, for he smiled peacefully: 'I think you know, sir,' said he; 'but I mean Jesus—Jesus.'

'If I were not quite a stranger to you,' I would ask you what makes you think that Jesus is yours and that you are his?'

'His own word and promise, sir,' the boy answered. 'He says in his very own word, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.'

'And are you one of his sheep, then?' I asked, as gently as I could.

'I believe in him, sir; I love him; and I can trust him,' the child whispered; and tears started in his eyes, as though the shadow of a doubt were too painful to be borne.

I wiped his tears away. I stooped down and kissed his cold forehead. I asked him to forgive me if I had given him pain.

'Oh, it is not that, sir; but I am very weak, you see, and a little thing makes me cry now.'

'You will not have to cry much more, my dear, happy boy,' I said; and my own cheeks were wet with tears as I spoke. 'You are going where there is no sorrow and crying, where God himself will wipe away all tears from your eyes.'

'Yes, sir; oh yes!'

I continued,—

"Yet a season and you know,
Happy entrance will be given;
All your sorrows left below,
And earth exchanged for heaven."

'Yes, sir, yes; oh yes!' said he again; and then he added, 'You would like to pray with me, wouldn't you, sir?'

I knelt down on the floor by his side; and was yet praying with the dying boy when the Jew landlord returned with the blanket. He did not withdraw when he saw how I was engaged, but listened, at least with a show of respect and reverence, and spoke as well as acted, at that time, with more apparent kindness of feeling. It might have been, however, that the hope of gain prompted him to this; for there is a sense in which 'money answereth all things,' and certainly with this man it seemed to be all-powerful. Before I left, I had removed the poor child, in my own arms, to the next attic (once little Fanny's and her father's home), in which was a fireplace, and the roof of which was tolerably entire. I had caused a fire to be lighted, too, and wrapped the little fellow up warmly. I had also procured wine, and put the glass to his lips; and then I bethought me of engaging medical assistance, though how vain it was to dream of preserving a life already dwindled to the finest thread, I knew full well.

And this put me in mind of the doctor who had visited my mother, as she lay dying; and then I remembered—what it is strange had never occurred to me before—that poor Peggy used to work at this house; and I wondered that I had not thought of making inquiries among her old employers, who might perhaps be able to give me some intelligence of my poor old nurse. But this was not to be thought of now.

I sent for a doctor, however, who came and received my fee, and shook his head gravely, but engaged to attend to the young invalid's comfort while he lived; and then having done all that seemed in my power, I departed, leaving the landlord to follow up his inquiries for poor Peggy.

I must shorten this part of my story, and

bring this chapter to a close. Several successive days I returned to Whiskers' Rents to see my young invalid; and I never knew till then how much I had yet to learn of patience, resignation, and faith in an ever-present though unseen Saviour; never till then saw such an exemplification of the apostle's words, 'Whom having not seen ye love, and in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' never till then so fully appreciated another apostle's question, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?'

I shall not repeat the boy's story, as I heard it afterwards from his mother's lips—it was a very simple one; nor will I, though tempted to do it, give the history of that mother's life; for I must hasten on to conclude my own history. I shall only say, therefore, that in less than a week from my first knowledge of him, the child died. I followed him to the grave, and mourned for him as for a brother. And then I tried to comfort his mother. Years afterwards, when I had a happy and prosperous home, she entered it as my housekeeper, and, by more than twenty years' faithful services to me and mine, repaid tenfold my small offices of friendship to her dying child.

CHAPTER XLIX.

I HEAR TIDINGS OF PEGGY, REVISIT MY OLD STABLE LOFT, AND RENEW ACQUAINTANCE WITH BEN THE OSTLER.

THE interest I felt in the stricken child at Whiskers' Rents did not cause me to neglect my search after Peggy Magrath; but it was unsuccessful. Her old employers had not seen her since her imprisonment; probably, therefore, shame for that disgrace had impelled her to seek another sphere for her industry. That she had sought me, however, was pretty certain, for I remembered that she had been seen in Whiskers' Rents, and had held communication with our old landlord; but if the secret of her retirement had been—as it most likely was—intrusted to him, he had carried it with him to the grave.

I had no reason to believe that his successor, the Jew landlord, slackened in his inquiries; for the expectation of a golden reward would keep him on the alert; but he met with success little better than my own. There was one old inhabitant of Whiskers' Rents, indeed, who re-

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