

The Family Circle.

LOVE'S LITTLE DAY.

"There are many to-morrows, my love, my dove,
But only one to-day."

Lo! 'tis the golden morn,
And on the air are borne
Song of the wooing bird and drone of bee.
Arise I oh love of mine,
Improve the morning shine
Sweet there's but one to-day for you and me

Shadows of afternoon
Fall on our path too soon,
Deep'ning until they reach the evening gray
From farther shores of night
May rise to-morrow's bright,
But, Love, for us, there is but one to-day

Graves of dead yesterdays,
Lie all along the ways
By which we came to stand together thus
We look in vain to see
Where the to-morrows be.
Dear heart! there is but just to-day for us
—Louise Phillips, in Harper's Bazar

(All Rights Reserved.)

MARJORIE'S CANADIAN WINTER.

BY AGNES MAULE MACHAR.

CHAPTER II. CONTINUED.

Marjorie's tears were flowing now. Her father took her hand in his, while he gently stroked her hair with the other; and, after a short pause, he went on.

"What I went through at that time, Marjorie, I could never tell in words. It was the blackness of darkness. I knew then what it was to be "without God and without hope in the world." I would have longed for death, but even that gave me no hope of reunion with her who was my life—and what did I know of a "beyond"? And healthy human nature shrinks from a vacuum! So I lived on, trying to forget my sorrow in my work. Your Aunt Millie came to live with me, and did all she could to cheer me. She was passionately fond of Tennyson's "In Memoriam," and sometimes in the evenings, when I sat too tired and sad to talk or read, she would read to me bits of that beautiful poem, which I had never cared to do more than glance at before. The beauty and music of the poetry attracted me at first, and by degrees some of its teaching found its way into my heart. I began to feel that human knowledge is not all knowledge, and that there were other ways of getting at truth than by our senses and our short-sighted human reasoning. And so, to make a long story short, I began to stretch out my hands through the darkness, to the Light that can shine even in darkness, and that, as I found, shone even for me. Your Uncle Ramsay, too, helped me by telling me that if I wanted to get more light, I must honestly seek to follow the light I had, and that Christ had said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." I began to study Christ's life and words, and was amazed to find there many things that I had never seen before—often as I heard and read the words—things that transcended my own highest ideal of moral purity, and that, alas, far transcended my power of acting up to them. But I felt that in the very desire to follow Christ came the power of following. There were many things that I did not see for a long time—some that I cannot say I see clearly even yet: but this I have long been sure of: that no light has ever come to this world's darkness to compare with the divine glory seen in Jesus Christ, and that in the loving following of him, is the life and light of men! I could say for myself, from the heart, what was said by one who was also a long and anxious seeker for truth, whose life I read some years ago. "Fully assured that when I am most a Christian, I am the best man, I am content to adhere to that as my guide in the absence of better light, and wait till God shall afford me more." And as the time has gone on, God has given me more light, so that some of the very things that once were difficulties to me, are now additional proofs of the divine origin of a religion which proud human nature could never, never have originated."

The room was very still. The fire had burned low as the absorbing talk had gone on; only the ticking of the clock and the dis-

tant sound of Rebecca's preparations for tea broke the silence. Mr. Fleming's voice had grown tired and weak, but presently he roused himself to say a few words more.

"I have told you all this, my child, because in this age of conflicting opinions few thoughtful minds can entirely escape the infection of prevailing doubt. And as changes are always liable to come, and some may soon come to our life together, I think it may be helpful to you hereafter to know what has been your father's experience, and what is his deliberate verdict after so many years of thought and of trial of the illusions of life without the true Light. I might not be able to satisfy Mrs. Lane yet on a cross-examination, and as it does not come natural to me to express myself in her particular phraseology, I never try to do so. But

"God fulfils himself in many ways;" and I am more and more satisfied that Christ's law of love is the law of light; and that in those two words, loving and following, lies the essence of that which is variously called "conversion," or a "new heart" or practical Christianity. "Rise up and follow me," was Christ's summons to those who would be His disciples, and then "If ye love me, keep my commandments," and "This is my commandment, that ye love one another!" And now, darling, ring for lights and tea; for I have talked rather too much and I feel a little faint."

Mr. Fleming talked no more that evening, but Marjorie never forgot that conversation, or rather her father's earnest words, which lingered in her mind for months and years to come. It made that mysterious something called 'conversion' so much clearer and simpler than it had ever seemed before. Just to 'follow' Christ; to try to do His will in loving obedience; she could try to do that, and she would. And when she read in her Testament that evening about the man sick of palsy whom Christ told to 'take up His bed and walk,' it flashed upon her that perhaps it was just in trying to obey Christ that he received the power to do it. And the light that had shone for her dear father and mother would, she was sure, shine for her also.

But what could be the 'change' her father had hinted at, as if something unknown to her were impending? Her father, she was sure, was growing decidedly better. The doctor no longer came to see him daily, and when he did, he spoke so cheerfully, that Marjorie felt quite reassured. Nettie Lane and the others girls had often told her that she might have a step-mother some day—an idea which seemed to her as impossible as it was painful. But she felt sure that her father could not have spoken of her mother as he had done, if he had the slightest thought of such a thing; and she dismissed it from her mind as out of the question. Whatever the impending change might be, it was not that. And, as often happens, what it really was, was something which would in all probability have never occurred, even to her dreaming imagination.

CHAPTER III.

A NEW DEPARTURE.

A few days after that Marjorie brought in her father's letters to the sitting-room, where he had begun to write again, though he was not yet allowed to leave the house. One of the letters bore a Canadian postage stamp, and the postmark of Montreal, and was addressed in the well-known flowing hand-writing of her aunt, Mrs. Ramsay. Another was addressed in her Aunt Millie's familiar hand, and Marjorie carried them in with eager expectation, for such letters were generally common property. But instead of reading them to her at once, as he usually did, Mr. Fleming merely opened them eagerly, and after a hasty glance over their contents, resumed his writing.

"Well, father dear," said Marjorie, in a disappointed tone, "aren't you going to tell me what Aunt Millie says? May I read her letter?"

"Not just now, dear," he replied, and Marjorie noticed that his hand was trembling a little; "you shall read both letters in the evening, when I have time to talk to you about them. But I can't do that just now."

Marjorie went off to school, feeling a little hurt, and wondering why her father could not at least have let her read dear Aunt Millie's letter, when he knew how eager she always was to hear from her. However, she knew her father always had a good reason for anything that seemed strange to her, so she trusted him now. But the day seemed a long one and after school she made haste to learn her lessons before tea, so that after tea she might be ready as soon as her father was at leisure.

He did not write or study in the evenings yet, and when Marjorie sat down beside him, and told him that her lessons were over, he seemed quite ready for their talk.

"I have a great deal to talk to you about, my child, he said, throwing his arms lovingly about her, 'and the sooner I begin the better—now, I didn't want you to read those letters this morning, because I wanted to tell you first what they were about, and I didn't feel ready to do it then. Marjorie darling, your Aunt Mary most kindly invites you to come and spend the winter with her in Montreal.'

"But, father dear, I couldn't go away and leave you," exclaimed Marjorie in bewilderment.

"My dear child, I am afraid that I must go and leave you—for a while," he said sadly. "No, don't be frightened, dear; the doctor thinks I am getting on nicely; but I have had a severe shake, and he thinks it would not be prudent for me to risk staying here through the winter. He strongly recommends me to go south, and your Aunt Millie is most anxious that I should go to her, for part of the winter, at any rate. Mr. Fulton and I have been talking the matter over, and he too endorses the doctor's advice. I can still carry on some of my work in connection with the office, even there. And as I shall probably take a voyage among the West India Islands, I can write some articles that will be of use both to the office and to myself. I should have liked very much to take you with me, dear; but there are several reasons against that, besides the additional expense. It would be a serious interruption to your studies just now, and you would find it very hard to settle down after it. Then your Aunt Mary has always been anxious to see more of you, and that you should get to know your cousins, and I know it will be much the best thing for you to be under her care for a while. It will be the next thing to having your own mother, dear."

Marjorie had listened without a word, so far too much stunned by all these unexpected announcements to say a word. She could scarcely realize at first, all that such a plan involved. But as it gradually dawned upon her that a long separation from her father was really inevitable, her head sank down on his shoulder and a burst of tears came to her relief.

"Don't suppose it isn't hard for me, too, darling," said Mr. Fleming, tenderly stroking her hair. "But I am older than you, and have had more experience in submitting to what must be; and then a few months don't seem so long to me to look forward, as when I was your age. But I am quite sure you'll have a very happy winter, and that you'll soon learn to love your aunt and cousins, and my dear old friend Ramsay."

And then he went on to tell her stories of things that had happened when they were at college together, showing his friend's goodness and kindness of heart, and also his love of fun, and before long Marjorie had almost forgotten her first broken-hearted feeling, and was smiling over her father's narrative of his own bewilderment when he first woke up to the fact that Ramsay actually preferred his sister Mary's society to his own!

"I can tell you, Marjorie," he said, "it was one of the severest snubs I ever got in my life, and how old Ramsay did enjoy it; and Mary, too, after she got rid of her first shyness."

Mr. Fleming and Marjorie talked a long time over all the arrangements that had to be considered. He had a good opportunity for letting his house furnished for a year, and as he and Marjorie always spent part of the summer in some quiet country quarters, he thought it better to avail himself of the chance. Rebecca would remain in the house to look after things, and could get on very well with

the old gentleman and his wife who were to take the house. And Mr. Fulton had a friend who was going to Montreal, and who could be Marjorie's escort, so that her aunt need not take the long journey, as she had offered to do, in order to take Marjorie North.

"But Robin, father!" said Marjorie, suddenly looking down at the shaggy little terrier. "We can't leave poor Robin in the house. He would break his heart."

"Oh! that reminds me that you haven't read your Aunt Mary's letter yet. I told her about Robin, and how unwilling I knew you would be to leave him behind—as she would have been herself indeed. And she says:—"By all means let Marjorie bring 'Robin Adair.' He will find a very warm welcome from all the family, including our big, good-natured Nero, who will patronize him with the greatest satisfaction." Now read the letter for yourself, and see if you don't think you will love your Aunt Mary just as much as your Aunt Millie, when you come to know her as well."

So Marjorie sat down to read her aunt's letter in which, after expressing the pleasure with which she would receive her niece, she went on to predict how much Marjorie would enjoy the novel experience of a Canadian winter, the sleighing, tobogganing, snowshoeing, and last, not least, the wonderful sights of the winter carnival. "The children are wild about outdoor sports," she said, "and I am sure the exercise and fun will be very good for Marjorie, for when I saw her I thought that, like yourself, she read and studied too much, and lived too dreamy and solitary a life."

Mrs. Ramsay had paid her brother a short visit, on the occasion of their youngest sister's marriage, and Marjorie could not but be attracted by her motherly manner and genuine kindness. She was her father's common-sense sister, as he used to call her, and he had frequently told her how her happy tranquillity of disposition had often been a true solace in his youthful troubles. He knew that the influence of her calm, bright Christianity and active, practical life would be very good for his impulsive and rather dreamy Marjorie, and this more than half reconciled him to the parting which he dreaded almost as much as she did. And it was pleasant, also, to think that his friend Ramsay should know and love his little girl, of whom he was secretly very proud, and he knew his old classmate would appreciate.

The next few days were very busy ones. Dr. Stone was anxious to get his patient off just as soon as possible, and there were many preparations to be made. Rebecca, who at first almost cried her eyes out at losing 'the master and Miss Marjorie, not to mention poor little Robin,' yet was glad to stay by the old house, was almost buried in the boxes she was packing, and the garments she was sorting and putting to rights. Marjorie and she made a careful inventory of the contents of the house, a task which made Marjorie feel herself of much use, as she carefully wrote down her list in a neat memorandum book. Mr. Fleming went into the city when the weather was fine enough, and made arrangements at the office and elsewhere. One of his pleasantest errands was to leave Marjorie's half-eagle—neatly put up as it had been planned—in the hands of the 'angel' he had met on that November day, when his illness had begun. She looked ill, herself, and Mr. Fleming felt sure that the little gift of money would be a real boon to her, if she would only use it in procuring comforts for herself. But he could not charge her to do this, for he merely performed the part of a messenger, only saying to her that he had been asked to hand her the package, and then at once coming away without waiting for questions.

(To be continued.)

The sure foundations of the state are laid in knowledge, not in ignorance; and every sneer at education, at culture, at book learning, which is the recorded wisdom of the experience of mankind, is the demagogues' sneer at intelligent liberty, inviting national degeneracy and ruin.—G. W. Curtis.