JOHN GRANT'S SUBSCRIPTION.

A True Story.

BY PRISCILLA LEONARD.

The room was narrow and stifling, and the rattling of passing wagons, the cries of street venders, and the noisy play of the children in the tenement, made it difficult to hear or to speak. On the bed lay an old woman, her sunken cheeks and thin hands thrown into strong relief by the red and white patchwork quilt which covered her emaciated body. Her eyes were half closed and her breathing labored, but she was evidently conscious, and listening with attention to the man who sat beside her, and whose strong young voice could be heard in spite of all the opposing clamors of the street.

"He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

To the hearer the sweet words brought comfort.

"I'm going—soon." Her eyes opened wide, and fixed themselves on the young man's face. "My boy's there. He died—twenty years ago. But I dreamed of him—last night—waiting for me. The Lord bless you, John Grant—for coming to me—and reading God's promises—to me. God bless you—all the days—of your life. I want you—I want—"

The feeble voice could no longer frame the words. She was hardly conscious, fast slipping down into the valley of death, and the young man was relieved when a kindly Irish neighbor came bustling in.

"Arrah, she's goin' fast! Leave her to me; nivet you stay, Mr. Grant, it's nothin' you can do. 'She'll last out the night, but she'll go at daybreak."

John left Mrs. McCrea in charge, and went up the rickety stairs to his room in the topmost story. The place was bare enough—a narrow bed, a chair, an old bureau—that was all; except the one thing that made it a home to him—his books. A small pine shelf held them all; but they glorified the room to him, as the face of a friend might do. Sober hued bindings, but good editions they were, of Shakespeare and Burns, Carlyle and Scott; and a Commentary that showed use as much as the Bible which the young man carried in his hand. High thinking, however, went hand in hand with plain living here.

John sat down on the bed, still holding his Bible mechanically. He was moved by the scene he had just left, for he had seen little of death before. In his quiet home in New England, where his Scotch parents had settled when they came to America, death was a matter for ceremony and concern, for the clergyman and the doctor, and for family privacy. To die as this poor creature was dying, alone in a crowded tenement, cared for only by the chance ministrations of rough neighbors, seemed terrible. He had been often with her during the last month, reading to her, and praying with her; but now that the end was so near, he was startled into awe. The blessing that she had breathed in her last utterance thrilled him with a sense of unworthiness, and yet of peace.

He had need of peace, for there was a problem facing him that kept his mind busy. A problem that the average young man, starting life in a great city and in a humble position, would never have put himself in the way of facing. And that problem was this:

John Grant was a Christian. That is common enough. But he was not an average Christian—there was the trouble. He was the sort of Christian that the Scotch know how to train; the sort of Christian that cannot have principles without putting them into practice. And this particular Scotch boy had been trained to give as well as to save. He had been taught that his own was not all his own; that what was given to the Lord was as sacred as what was saved for one's self. With these ideas, he came to the city, and joined himself to a growing Church in his neighborhood; and with these ideas when money was needed for the hand-to-hand, winning fight the church was making for the souls of the masses around him, he gave his proportion regularly and fully. This was foolish enough, the worldly wise would say, since the lad had but a small weekly salary, and should have saved it all. But there was more ahead. The church found itself unable to pay all its expenses, and the members resolved to pledge themselves, each for a definite amount, to tide over the difficulty.

John had been promoted and his salary raised three dollars a week. He calculated the time allowed by the pledges—six months—and pledged himself deliberately for fifty dollars. He had already come to the front in the little church, taught in the Sunday school, and was a favorite with the minister because of his steady willingness to do work without questioning or complaining. John was a very human young fellow, and he couldn't help being gratified by the approbation of those he honored in the church; and he recognized that praise for right-doing was very pleasant indeed. Perhaps he had a touch of pride in himself for being able and willing to give where others held back.

It is the lot of humanity to be sick sometimes; and he was no exception. It was not a dangerous illness he had that spring, and he never even wrote home about it, for fear of troubling his mother; but it was severe enough to keep him three weeks from his work, and to knock his calculations to the winds. Doctor's bills and medicine completed the ruin; and when John went back to work he realized that he must inevitably come out ten dollars behind on his subscription.

That was what worried him now, as he sat on his bed, and looked up at his beloved books. They could give him no counsel how to produce ten dollars out of nothing. Over and over in his mind he marshaled the familiar items—so much a week possible to save, so much in his pocketbook, so much already in bank—and always the same familiar deficit of ten dollars. Let it go? never! Others would fall out, and make him their excuse; the minister would be disappointed in him. And, after all, the promise was not to man; it was to God.

John sighed, and got up from the bed, laying down his Bible on the bureau. A marker fell out, and he opened the book to lay it back. It was his mother's bookmark, and she had put it in the book of Proverbs, which is the book by which Scotch parents bring up their boys to a clean youth and a sturdy manhood. John glanced at the page, and read his favorite text there.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy path."

It comforted him a little, as he took up his hat and went downstairs. The halls were noisy and the doors half open, with that careless publicity of the poor one sees in cities. It was hot and close in the streets, as in the house. The sidewalks were crowded; at the fruit stands jabbering Italians were selling their wares; the saloons were doing a rousing trade. John wandered along till he reached a wider, more crowded, more noisy street still. On the corner stood a group of young men, and one of them called out to him. He turned and recognized one of the clerks in the warehouse where he was employed.

"Look here, Grant," said young Lane, catching him by the arm "will you do something for me?" He was a kindly fellow, and John liked him, so he responded at once with a "Yes."

"You see that swinging door, Grant? Well, it's a roulette place. Now, you're a new hand, and you'll be lucky. I haven't struck luck for a week. I'll give you this five dollars, and the fellows will give you some, too. All you do is to go over there, put some of the money down, and choose your number. I'll go with you, and show you how. You'll make on it, sure; and we'll go halves with you. See?"

It was a temptation. Nobody would ever know it. And it was surely a little thing to do to oblige a comrade. It wasn't staking his own money. It wasn't even a game of cards. And the money—it would be lost anyhow, spent in drink and gambling; why should not half of it, at least, be turned to good uses. It was such an opportunity—and no one would know.

"Lean not unto thine own understanding—in all thy ways acknowledge Him." The text started up in his mind, and brushed his excuses away in a moment. No, he couldn't do it.

"I'm sorry, Lane. But I can't go into a gambling house."

"O, well, suit yourself. You'd have a ten dollar bill in your pocket in half an hour, if you had any sand."

But John had recovered his balance.

"Thank you, Lane. You meant it kindly, but I just can't, you know."

And he walked on, leaving Lane to grumble over his refusal with the crowd.

John went on down the street. He felt unhappy and discouraged. The devil seemed to have all the money and all the power anyway. Here were the theatres, the gambling houses and saloons, all running and all prospering. No need of subscriptions here; no need to save and work to help the devil's business along. And, then, in the very thought, came the recoil. The devil had the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; Christ had not where to lay his head. The devil asked no self-denial, no sacrifice; Christ demanded of his servants to enter into the fellowship of his sufferings. The young man's soul rose in a sudden thankfulness that he had a cross to bear and a Master to follow. And the next moment the solution of his problem came to him, at the sight of a pawnbroker's window. He thought of his watch and chain, of his books, of some extras in clothing he would not need again until winter, and he made up his mind. He stepped into the place, and questioned the Jewess in charge. Ten dollars could be raised at any time on his possessions, he found, and he went home and slept soundly on his decision.

In the morning Mrs. McCrea told him that the sick woman, Mrs. Sinclair, had passed away without speaking again. A man had come in during the evening, "very respectable folks," a distant relative, she thought, who had taken charge of everything. John was relieved, for he feared she had no friends. He went on to the warehouse, to find Lane very cross, indeed.

"I put up the money myself, and, of course, I lost," he grumbled. But John really couldn't see that he was responsible.

One week more, and the payment was due. With a reluctant hand, one evening, John sorted out all he could spare, the watch and chain, a couple of books, etc.—and carried them to the Jewess. When he came home, with the ten dollars and his pawn tickets, the room seemed very empty and lonely. He felt homesick and depressed; the sense of being lost in the great city, a helpless atom, insignificant and bitterly poor, came over him, till he put his head down at last, upon the sill of his grimy window, and sobbed. He thought of his beloved books fingered by uncomprehending hands, and his watch and chain, and how their absence would be commented upon. And then suddenly sat upright.

"You'd make a pretty martyr, John Grant!" he cried, and in that contempt of himself went to bed.

He paid over the money the next day. There was some pleasure in the doing of it, but afterwards things seemed flat. Work was especially dull and hard that week; but John was determinedly cheerful, and let Lane joke him about the disappearance of his watch, and ask him if he had been trying roulette on his own account, without caring much. When he went home a letter was lying on his bureau, directed in a strange hand. He opened it carelessly, and read:

Law Offices, 10 and 12 Pratt Building.

DEAR SIR:

Our late client, Mrs. Amy Sinclair, having left a will devising all her personal property to you, in consideration of kindness shown by you during her last illness, we would be pleased to have you call at our office tomorrow to settle up the matter. The property amounts to about sixty dollars, outside of funeral expenses, fees, etc. The deceased left no relatives.

Yours truly,

PRATT, WHITE & CO.

Mrs. Sinclair! who lived on an annuity, and was counted poor even by her poor neighbors! And just at this time! And just the amount of his subscription—no, a trifle over, for the Lord gives good measure. A great wave of happiness, of faith, of new reliance on God, and new joy in him, mounted in the lad's heart; he fell on his knees, and prayed with an adoring soul, consecrating himself and all that he had anew to such a Master.

That was—well—thirty years ago. John Grant has a fortune now, won by honest work and thift; and he holds it, as he held his little salary, as the stewart of the Lord. He gives, and gives largely, and is never tired of giving; yet the gifts are known as the smallest part of his beneficence. Into how many lives it reaches is known only to him and to his Master. Since that dying woman blessed him with her last breath, every year has brought to him the blessings of others who were poor and ready to die, and whom he has succored. Every year has brought him blessings from mission fields at home and abroad, from those lying in the shadow of death in all lands under the sun. Every year has brought the blessing of the Master upon a noble, beautiful life lived to God's glory before men. I think I should like to be in John Grant's place on the great day. And the secret of it all is in the text his mother taught him—the text he has taught his own sons after him:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."—*Presbyterian.*

THE FLOWER PARABLE.

BY HELENA MAYNARD.

As Fred Barlow came up the walk, he saw through the open door his pretty cousin Lois standing with a bouquet of roses in her hands, the picture of perplexity.

"Well?" he said inquiringly.

She turned quickly.

"Well," she repeated, "what do you think of that?" and she handed him the flowers.

He saw at a glance that the bouquet had been one of rare beauty, but now the flowers were withered, from many of them the petals were fallen, and the ferns and smilax were yellow and drooping. Even as he took it a shower of rose leaves fell at his feet.

"With the love of Mrs. Malden," he read from the card attached.

"She hasn't just sent it, of course?" he asked in a questioning tone.

"Sambo brought it in that box to the door not five minutes ago," she answered.

Fred picked up the box, and looked it over carefully, as if to find some explanation of the strange gift.

"Depend upon it," he said at length, "she must have sent it by him several days ago and the rascal forgot to bring it. Of course she wouldn't insult you by sending you such a specimen," and he tossed the bouquet contemptuously on the table. "Come," he said, "let's have a game of tennis."

In the interest of the game Lois forgot the matter but when she was alone again her perplexity returned.

"I don't believe Sambo could have forgotten it," she said. "How beautiful it must have been. I don't understand it at all, and when I get a chance I am going to ask Mrs. Malden."

The chance came sooner than she expected, for that very afternoon Mrs. Malden called and asked her to ride. Mrs. Malden's stylish turnout was the admiration and envy of all the Creston girls, and Lois felt quite elated as she took her seat in the handsome phaeton. For a little while they talked of indifferent matters, and then Lois said:

"Those were very rare roses you sent me this morning," thinking as she slightly emphasized "this morning" that she would find out whether they had been sent before.

"Yes," said Mrs. Malden, "they were beautiful. I gathered and arranged them for you Monday, but I enjoyed their beauty and fragrance so much I kept them for myself as long as I could."

She spoke seriously, but when she saw the look of amazement on Lois' face she could not conceal a smile.

"If it wasn't a mistake, Mrs. Malden, it must have been a parable," said Lois decidedly. "Please tell me quick."

"Dear Lois," said her friend, "I wanted to show you how you mean to treat your best Friend."

If Lois was perplexed before, she was wholly mystified now, and begged for an explanation.

"Last week," said Mrs. Malden, "I passed a group of high school girls on the street. I think they were talking about Anna Temple's joining the church the week before, for I heard her name, and then I heard one of them say: 'Oh, of, course, I mean to be a Christian when I get to be an old woman, but now I am young, I mean to enjoy myself and have a good time.'"

"I said that myself," said Lois, frankly, "but surely—"

She paused, and after waiting a moment for her to conclude her sentence, Mrs. Malden said:

"There never was a greater mistake than the idea that becoming a Christian lessens the enjoyment of life, but it was not that I wished to show you. Life lies before you bright with promise like those budding roses when I gathered them. Beauty and health are yours, mental faculties alert and active, unnumbered opportunities, and the energy and enthusiasm of youth. And from the Friend who has given it all to you, and says, 'Give me thine heart,' you turn away and answer: 'No; yet O Lord, not yet; wait until I am old and feeble, when bodily strength is failing, when mental powers are waning, when my life can be of no pleasure to myself and no service to Thee.' Were not these fading flowers a fit emblem of such a gift, dear Lois?"

The young girl bowed her head in assent, but she made no other reply.

. . . . . .

The next morning Fred ran in to see why his cousin had not been at the party the evening before.

"Oh, I could not go," Lois said; "I wanted to think."

"To think," repeated Fred bantering-ly. "I was afraid you were sick, but I had no idea it was anything so serious. Have you called a doctor? Does he think you will get over it? Is it contagious?"

"Oh, I hope it is," eagerly interrupted Lois. "I was thinking about those flowers," and she pointed to the bouquet still standing on the table beside him.

"Oh, yes, I see," Fred began again.

"Brooding over the insult you have received, planning for sweet revenge. If you need any assistance, remember I am at your service."

But Lois was too much in earnest to smile at his raillery.

"Do you know, Fred, when Mrs. Malden said that she picked those flowers for me Monday, but didn't send them until yesterday, because she wanted to enjoy them herself as long as possible, I was too astonished to say a word."

"I should think so," said Fred. "Did she really say that?"

"Yes, and she did it to show me that it was really like you and me putting off being christians until we are old."

Fred whistled softly and Lois went on. "Don't you see, we think that while life is full of hope and promise, it is too good for the Lord; but when it is almost gone, when, Mrs. Malden says, it is no pleasure to us and no service to Him, then we mean to give it to Him."

"Nonsense, Lois," said Fred.

"Oh, of course, we never put the thought into so many words, but it really amounts to that. How do you think it sounds?"

"I think it sounds decidedly shabby, and it strikes me you might get left. What if He should refuse such a gift?"

"Oh, no, He wouldn't," said Lois confidently. "That 'whosoever' takes in the most worn and worthless. But though He would not refuse it, I should be ashamed to offer it. I have been thinking it all out. Christ has given His best for me, and I am going to give my best to Him. Will you not do the same Fred?" and she looked at him with shining eyes.

"Oh, come, don't push a fellow so; I haven't 'thought' it all out,' as you say. It seems to me it is asking a good deal," he replied.

"Asking a good deal? Oh Fred, it is only asking that you treat the Lord honestly and honorably! It is giving you a chance to make the best possible investment of your life. It is offering you all that gives life any meaning, or death any hope."

At this moment a morning caller was announced, and Fred took his departure. But her last words followed him. All that day, and for many a day, they echoed through his brain. Watching Lois closely, he acknowledged to himself that she had gained something that filled life for her with a sweet and noble meaning, and standing a few months after, at the open grave of an earnest christian, a young man whose instantaneous death had shocked the whole community, he realized that the religion of Jesus Christ was, indeed, "all that gives death any hope."

To-day, he, too, can say sincerely and joyfully:

"My life I give to Thee
I would not be my own;
O, give, let me be
Thine ever, Thine alone.
My heart, my life, my all I bring
To Thee, my Savior, and my King."

—*Herald and Presbyter.*

No family living in a bilious country should be without Parmelee's Vegetable Pills. A few doses taken now and then will keep the Liver active, cleanse the stomach and bowels from all bilious matter and prevent Ague. Mr. J. L. Price, Shoals, Martin Co., Ind., writes: "I have tried a box of Parmelee's Pills and find them the best medicine for Fever and Ague I have ever used."

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A young man out of employment went recently to an older man asking advice. "I have," said the junior, "commanded a certain salary. If I accept the place which offers itself at one-third my previous remuneration, will I not let myself down, practically say that my value has decreased? Is it not better to do nothing than to do what is poorly paid?"

"John," said the other man, "my advice to a man needing work and out of it always is, to take the first honest thing that comes along. Hard or easy, obscure or conspicuous, ill-paid or well paid, take hold of the work that offers itself to your hand, and do it with your might. You are more likely to find work, if at work somewhere, than if sitting at home doing nothing. In my own day, I once could get no employment except to help the porter in a factory at a dollar a day. I took hold of that, it was all I could find; today I control the factory and am owner of the business."

"That," said the youth, "was nearly forty years ago. Things in the business world were different then."

"Things are never different," was the reply. "An energetic man will gain nothing by sitting still and waiting for the large place. Let him take hold at once of the small place and fill that till he overflows it."—*Intelligencer.*

A lady in San Francisco engaged a Chinese cook. When the Celestial came, among other things, she asked him his name. "My name," said the Chinaman, smiling, "is Wang Hang Ho." "Oh, I can't remember all that," said the lady. "I will call you John." John smiled all over, and asked, "What you names?" "My name is Mrs. Melville Landon." "Me no memble all that," said John. "Chinaman he no savey Mrs. Membul Landon. I call you Tommy."

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Express for Quebec and Montreal	16.30
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Passengers from St. John for Quebec and Montreal take through sleeping cars for Moncton at 13.30 o'clock.

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Express from Sussex	8.30
Express from Montreal and Quebec (Monday excepted)	10.30
Express from Moncton (daily)	10.30
Express from Halifax	15.30
Express from Halifax, Pictou and Campbellton	18.30
Accommodation from Moncton	24.00

The trains of the Intercolonial Railway are heated by steam from the locomotive, and those between Halifax and Montreal, via Levis are lighted by electricity.

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D. POTTINGER, General Manager.

Railway Office, Moncton, N. B., October, 1894.

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