

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

READINGS FOR LENT.

Mark vi. 31.

Come to a desert place to rest, apart
From all the strife of earthly glare and din;
Come with thy sin-stained soul, and weary
heart,

In faithful penitence look o'er thy sin.

The task is sad, but yet 'tis sweeter far
Than all the sickly round of mirth and
guin
That in the city's market-places jar,
Filling the hungry heart with want and
pain!

Not in blank chill despair we sorrow now,
But with a trembling hope, amid our fears;
Though 'neath a weary load of sin we bow,
Yet may we smile through penitential
tears!

For One before us trod the desert wild,
Fought with, and conquered, all its dreadful
powers:
Making it safe for every trustful child,
E'en in its deepest shades and darkest
hours.

To know we oft have sinn'd—tho' oft for-
given!
To know how dearly Christ our victory
won,
This draws us where our Lord hath striven,
To be with Him, in joy and sorrow, one!

Thus may we keep our Lenten watch and
fast,
Not trusting our own arms to win us
heaven,
But grieving for the sin of all the past,
"Loving Him much," Who hath so "much
forgiven!" A.G.

—Church Chronicle.

GRANNY'S JUBILEE.

[FROM THE QUIVER].

CHAPTER I.

There was a skeleton in the cupboard at Briarly Farm, and a turned picture, very like to what we hear and read of in the houses of the rich and proud. Abel Manly was proud enough for any aristocrat, though only going about in the homely grey suit of a yeoman; for pride, be it known, is not always confined to those in high places. Not pride is everywhere, seen or not seen, and when unseen mayhap it is the worst pride of all, the hardest to uproot; and such an uprooting when it does take place! But to our story.

It has to do with the Jubilee lately celebrated, and with Christmas time as well. Oh! a mix-medley story it is—I hardly know where to begin. Here is a good place.

On a fair April morning, when the Lent lilies were dancing in the flower-bed outside Briarly Farm, and sweet, gliding sunbeams streaming in over the floor of the hall-like front passage from the open door, like a voiceless something pleading for better things than skeletons in cupboards, pride, and the like, good Mrs. Manly and her spouse, Abel, stood in this same sunny hall. At least, she stood in sunshine, her husband in shade, and these are the words they were saying—

"I had hoped that, with this Jubilee coming on, you might have done so."

"Jubilee—what have jubilees to do with it?"

Such a stalwart giant was Abel Manly, with the dignity of his sixty years.

"You know, 'Every man unto his posses-

sion, every man unto his family,' is how the Bible puts it." (See Levit. xxv. 10.) A sweet, tender, blue-eyed woman was she who pleaded, long past the prime of her days; the light in these same blue eyes quenched, and patience written on every line of her yet comely face, for those who had eyes to see—ay, patience, submission, and long suffering, long-waiting love.

This was the story of her beautiful, quivering face, as she stood by her lord and master, Sarah-like, looking up to him as such, but mayhap with more than Sarah-like meekness. Ay, and if a wanderer had gone out from the farm, as in those long patriarchal days, it was not by her sending.

"That may be, but the Bible times are not our times, and, if they were, it would make no difference."

Abel Manly was a hard, proud, unbending, man; even his love was cased about with this "touch-me-not" crust of his, which hid away his better nature, as it were, few seeing or knowing him as he was. But Anne, the wife of his bosom, knew him to be a man of strong affection—or Annie, as he called her in his tenderest modes: but that was not to-day.

"No, Anne, I forbid you, as an obedient wife, to broach the subject again." These were his words, and away he tramped out into the sunshine among the Lent-lilies, and round to the yard, not heeding how the faded blue eyes of the little woman filled with tears, how hand clasped over hand, and disappointment well-nigh erased the patience and submission of her tell-tale face.

"What is it, Granny?"

A little mite of a fluffy, fair-haired girl of seven, just Granny herself in miniature, with all the joy and the mirth of childhood about her, came dancing out from somewhere among the shadows lurking in the hall: such personages often being where they are not supposed to be on certain occasions, hearing what they are not intended to hear, and at the best, *de trop*, as the French would say. Thus was it this morning.

"What is it, Granny?" inquired the midge, in that silvery voice which the echoes of the old house loved so well.

"Nothing, Nance. Then you've been playing little pitcher again?" Granny's tone belied her reproving words, and Nance noted it. Yes, she was Nance, the daughter of another Nance, who married, went out from her home, and, dying, sent her friendless child to nestle in the old nest which had sheltered her, to revel in the love in which she had revelled—another Nance to fill the void in the old farmhouse. It was sweet to Mrs. Manly's ears to hear the echoes catch the old name, and toss it hither and thither along the gusty passages, to repeat the dancing footsteps till they sounded like the tread of two pairs of childish feet; but she craved to hear that other name twining with Nance's, Nance and Sack—so it had been in the old days; now the little child was all that remained, save a turned picture, the memory of a wrong, a sin committed, a wanderer gone out, disowned, as it were, by his father, and a mother's heart craving in undefined agony over an undefined fear. Terribly real would the fear become to her at dead of night, lying wakeful on her bed, thinking of her wanderer, thirsting, not like that other disowned one, of Bible story, for a drink of water, but for his soul. Ay, the picture grew so vivid at times, that, in spite, she was fain to cry like that other lone mother, "Let me not see the death of the child!"

"I wasn't playing pitcher, Granny; but I heard," replied wee Nance. "And, Granny, what is jubilee?" she asked, as Mrs. Manly stood, looking out through the front door at the Lent-lilies and the April gladness.

Beyond in the meadows were the lambs playing among the buttercups and daisies, and the distant hills crowned with glory.

"A jubilee, dear? That's what's coming to the Queen."

"And do you want to be like the Queen?" inquired the child, linking her hand in Granny's.

"No, dear, not that—the Queen is a happier woman than I shall ever be." Granny's gaze still strayed among the Lent-lilies, and away over the meadows to the distant hills.

"Well, yes, she has lots and lots of fine things, hasn't she, and a crown?"

"She has lots and lots of good children, as can come to see her, and make her happy." There was a touch of resentment in Granny's gentle tones.

"Yes, and her husband is dead, isn't he?"

Children do draw a bow at a venture sometimes; so did Nance now. The words of Elkanah rang through Mrs. Manly's Bible-stored mind—

"Am not I to thee better than ten sons?"

"Oh, God, forgive me, and help me to bear my yoke, though 't isn't youth with me, a id my heart is sore with longing," she murmured, her nervous hands twining one over the other.

"What, Granny?—what did you say?"

"Nothing, Nance, nothing," was the reply; and Nance wondered did Granny know she was telling a story? For she did say something.

"Granny, are jubilees only for queens, or do people have them?" asked the young prattler, a moment afterwards.

"Yes, child; people have them sometimes, the people will take part in this one coming, as well as the Queen."

"And did you want to take part in this one? and did Grandfather say no?"

"I wanted to have a Bible jubilee, and—and, child, it was denied me." Granny's tears fell fast now like rain, quietly and steadily as in autumn time.

"Poor Granny! What is a Bible jubilee?" She reached up, and twining her arms as well as she could round the little woman's waist; the tears came dripping down upon her shining hair, and her sweet daisy face upturned in her half-pity.

"I can't tell you, dear, but you can see it all in your Bible."

Yes, Nance had a Bible, a nice new one, that Granny gave her on her seventh birthday; Grandfather had written her name in it. Nance Danton, and Granny's name and his own. And she could read it, too—she often read it on Sundays, only dancing across to Granny now and then when a hard word puzzled her. She would read it now, search for the jubilee, for she did not think Granny would give her any lessons this morning; she never did when she cried and had a headache.

"I'd not cry, Granny, or you'll have your headache. And perhaps the Queen's Jubilee'll be a Bible Jubilee, and perhaps Grandfather'll let you take part in that," said the wise little woman, reaching up till Granny stooped down and kissed her; then she rushed away for her Bible, and as it was a busy day in the kitchen, she stole with it into the parlour. Here she sat with Granny and Grandfather on Sunday afternoons, in summer-time, looking out through folding glass doors upon the sweet-williams, white lilies, snap-dragons, and the like, with the bee-hives at the end of the walk, under the old elm tree, and hard by the summer-house. Here, sitting down by the sunny glass doors, one just a little ajar, because she liked to hear the birds sing and the bees hum among the dancing Lent-lilies—never such a woman as Granny for Lent-lilies, and other common flowers—here she sat on her own low stool, searching her Bible—very like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay—for the description of a Bible jubilee and the way of keeping it. Chapter after chapter—such a bewildering maze for a child. But she had a good stock of patience, as well as plenty of time, sitting there alone through the long sunny morning; and,