

COLD WATER ARMY PLEDGE, BY ANNA GORDON.

God help me evermore to keep This promise that I make! I will not chew, nor smoke, nor swear Nor poisonous liquors take. For poison drinks are very bad, I know the names of some; Ale, brandy, whiskey, wine and beer, With cider, gin, and rum. I'll try to get my little friends, To make this promise too! And every day I'll try to find Some temperance work to do.

QUINCE, AND HOW THE LORD LED HIM.

(By Miss L. Bates.) CHAPTER XXVII.

RETURN TO MR. CHASE'S FARM.

When vacation came, Quince received a pressing invitation to visit Scarborough. To say that he was anxious to accept would be to express feebly his desire to visit the farm and to look once more upon his mother's grave. Another grave had been made there; Grandamma Evans—the dear, good woman who in every instance showed him kindness—was lying close by the side of his mother. It took from the solitude, the loneliness, that at first haunted him; when thinking of one he could also think of the two who had taken sweet counsel together in life as still being companions. Flowers covered the graves; trees bent lovingly above them, and birds sang there. It was a quiet resting-place, rising up clear and distinct before him, and always beautiful. Wherever he went, the thought of it would go with him; memory held nothing dearer.

Miss Rachel's invitation was extended to Mr. Seago's entire family; she did not wish to separate Quince from them. All must come. It was finally settled that Mrs. Seago and Gertrude would spend the vacation at the farm. Mr. Haverall had taken Frank Belden home, and Mr. Chase had written that he would feel disappointed if Quince failed to keep his engagement.

"It is doubtless for the best," he said as he packed the small trunk; "I have learned that everything is for the best. God sees for us and where he leads it is safe to follow. I like to think of his promise: 'I will guide thee with mine eye.'"

Gerty brought some small keepsakes; she looked very bright and happy.

"I don't want you to forget us, Quince." "Just as though I could!" with a swift glance into the beautiful face.

"I am glad that you are to go to Scarborough," Quince said later to Mrs. Seago as the stage rumbled up to the door and he stood with his cap in his hand ready to say "Good-bye."

"Just think of it! We are to see the very house where grandamma lived, and you, Quince," Gerty exclaimed as she gave him her hand.

"Good-bye, Gerty," said Quince, hurriedly.

"Good-bye," her blue eyes filling with tears; then suddenly darting forward, she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

There was a new stage-driver. The man did not know Mr. Chase, but he had been told to say to Quince that a team would be at Springvale to take him to the farm.

"What has become of the old driver?" asked Quince.

"You see, he'd driv so long he was mighty tired; and his wife hankered after something else, and they pulled up and went West and located a claim. Hard work, I fancy—most a hard as stage-drivin'; but it's a change, and maybe they like it," touching up his leaders as he spoke.

"When the railway cuts through, it will be different here," continued Quince.

"It won't be long. Beats all what money can do—and brains too, for that matter."

"Yes; it requires a good deal of planning," Quince replied.

"I never had much chance myself, but I mean my children shall have. I've two, and there's none smarter; and they both go to school."

"You are a happy man," returned Quince, with an air of genuine friendliness.

"None happier. My wife sees me off every morning; and the road is pleasant; and I manage to pick up somebody to talk to. Take it as a whole, I'm satisfied."

When they reached the place where they changed horses, Quince jumped from the box to the wheels and swung himself down.

Looking around, he saw several travellers standing on the long, low porch in front of the village tavern, but he was glad that among them there was no one whom he remembered to have seen before.

"You've been over this road, I take it?" said the driver when once more they had mounted and the horses were under way.

"Once only. I find several changes, however; I scarcely recognized the tavern."

"No; it has changed lately. They take in a deal of money for a small place, though it's mostly for whiskey."

"Whiskey!" "Yes; they sell sights of it. You wouldn't think it, perhaps, but that tavern has just scooped in nigh about every farm 'round the village. Won't do 'em much good, accordin' to my way of thinkin'. The oldest boy ain't much older'n you, and he's a high one. Drinks like a fish; costs the old man a heap to get him out of his scrapes. He'll go too deep some time, and then the law will have him."

It was a terrible picture, and graphically painted. Quince trembled and turned pale.

"There must be some fearful fascination, or people would not be led on to do such things," he said musingly.

"It's the devil's own work, and it's my idea that he don't want anything better—specially when he gets the church-folks to taking a drop."

"There are not many of this sort, I hope?" continued Quince, with a face full of seriousness.

"More than you'd think," with energy.

"Such a state of things is very sad," Quince said, regretfully. "The followers of Christ should be very careful to abstain from everything that has a tendency to injure the cause. It is too much of an open question, I think. As a habit it is fearful; and it is safe to say that no one will form the habit who honestly takes the Bible for his guide."

"That's so!" exclaimed the driver. "Stick to that, and you'll do well enough. And let me tell you, if you're one of them that means to preach the gospel—and you look like it—don't be afraid to preach that doctrine. It's the truth, and people like to hear truth from a preacher. Now, I don't make any great profession myself, but my wife's a church-member, and she's sound on the drink question; most women are. And they're waking up to it too; it won't be always as it has been. Women are the ones who suffer, and little children; and men won't be allowed to go such lengths. Why, in some of the States they can't now, and it'll come here."

The brown, seamed face was full of enthusiasm. The driver was evidently interested in the question of temperance, and he knew what was going on in the outside world relative to the subject.

Not long afterward there was a sensible impetus given to the stage; the horses were sending along the road as if pursued by an enemy.

"Beats all how much the critters know. There's Kate, that off-leader; I just believe she scents the stable whenever we get here. You see, we're coming into Springvale and she knows it," said the driver.

When the stage halted before the village tavern, Mr. Chase was standing on the steps.

"Here you are! I should have been disappointed had you not come," he called to Quince, who was swinging himself down from the driver's seat. "How tall you have grown! Clapping the lad's hand and looking into his face. 'We have been expecting you. Come right in, leading the way into the parlor.'—'Here, wife! here is Quince,' with his old-time kindness.

Then Aldine and Merry sprang out from their hiding-place behind the door, and were followed by Olive, and, an instant after, by Mr. Dibell.

"You see, we all wanted to come, and it is such a lovely day," remarked Mr. Chase, glancing from one glad face to another.

There was a change which Quince quickly noticed. The children were taller and their cheeks were fuller and browner. Olive was the same, but not the same; he could hardly comprehend how it was. She stood before him in the fulness of her beauty, sweet and pure as the rose that was yesterday but a just-opening bud.

The drive home was pleasant. Mr. Dibell and Olive had a buggy to themselves; the

others went in the jersey. As they drove along, Mr. Chase spoke of his plans.

"Vacation is not to be all work," he said to Quince. "In the first place, I am not doing so much this year as I did last; I have my rest-days. I am happier for it; we are all happier."

The sun was setting in a sea of molten gold. The house and the fence had been newly-painted, and the green hedge looked greener against the white palings.

"You observe that we have made some improvements," Mr. Chase said as they came in sight of the dwelling; "inside it looks better. We don't mean to grow rusty as we grow older."

"I hope you have not made any changes in the ravine?" said Quince as he looked at the house with evident satisfaction.

"It was a splendid place for declamation, I remember;" and Mr. Chase laughed outright.

Quince reddened. "You never imagined you had a listener. It was just as well as it was; you might have broken down or failed to gesticulate properly. It was that, I think, more than anything else that made me resolve to give you a little better chance. Mind, if you want to try it again, I promise not to be a listener," returned Mr. Chase as he noted the embarrassed look on Quince's face.

The house was thoroughly in order. Quince found his old room with fresh paper on the walls and a pretty carpet of soft wood-colors on the floor. He was grateful, but still the thought would come: "What if I should disappoint Mr. Chase?" Going back, he lived over the time past when he was striving to work and to study, driving the cows to pasture and coming home through the ravine, in order to find a place where he could declaim without being heard by others. Blushes flitted over his cheeks as he recalled the many times he had inhaled a stone and talked to the trees. He little thought then that he had a listener, but Mr. Chase had been there. And now it was possible that he was expecting more from him in the future than he would be able to give.

One lesson he had been striving to learn, however—not to be troubled. He was to try to do his best each moment and leave results with God. Drawing a small Bible from his pocket, he read: "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant. Oh, keep my soul, and deliver me. Let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee."

CHAPTER XXVIII. A PLEASANT HOLIDAY.

Quince is up and dressed with the earliest daylight. Opening his window noiselessly, he looks out. The atmosphere is idyllically cool and pleasant. There is the bridge and the winding path through clumps of juniper and dogwood trees. The gray dawn is tremulously waiting the sunrise. He can go through the ravine and return before the others are stirring.

As the boy passes through the white gate he is reminded of the time when first he saw it, and almost involuntarily he casts a glance backward to see if the swing is still there. The white curtain hangs limp against the window above; it is Olive's room, and Olive is asleep and dreaming, perhaps.

As he leaves the road his feet brush the gossamer veil from the grass. The zigzag fence that borders the ploughed fields remains the same; the same twining vines and tendrils cluster about it. He remembers the ploughshare, tearing up the green sod. How the squirrels frisked along the upper rail, chattering, scolding, but never frightened from the field by his too near approach! There he is now—if not the very chipmunk of last year, at least one so very like as to make it evident that he belongs to the same family. Looking at him, Quince feels a boyish desire to jump the fence and strike across a corner of the field. With a light pressure of his hand on the old gray rail, he stands on the other side. The squirrel darts away, and a bluebird looks with fluttering tremor out from the thick branches. The vibrant tap of a woodpecker is heard before he reaches the bridge, and a bobolink crosses the path, dropping, as he goes, a little rhapsody of song.

The path wears an appearance of disuse; there are tangles of reed-grass and creeping dewberry, cinquefoil and glistening ivy-leaves. The musical ripple of the brook is

yet tuned to the same key; he remembers it as one remembers a song without words. Everything shows a lush growth; nevertheless, change marks the spot. There had been whistling gales and winter whirl of snows and crystal covering, and these are transmuted into wealth of greenness and gay array of summer flowers, gold mullein-stocks and long pink spikes of fireweed.

There are the same coiled roots and overhanging banks, under which the trout glide and play in and out. But this is not the object of his visit. He intends coming again with rod and fly; but now he is eager to note the change since he has been there—to stand once more upon the rock where the echo of his solitary voice quite frightened him when he began to speak. There is the old camping-ground—the very place where he made the fire and hung the pot in true gipsy-fashion. A hill of sweet fern has grown up near it.

Farther on, billowy fields of wheat and barley are seen through the openings, and on the morning air comes a whiff from a sweet-scented field with its cocks of new-mown hay.

It is time to turn his steps. There is a tremulous golden flush in the east, and a soft light penetrates the hidden recesses of the ravine. There are too many tangles; he must take the old path. There is a cluster of wild-roses; it is out of his way, but he must gather as many as he can conveniently carry. The dew is still upon them. There is a flutter of wings and a shower of crystal drops, but the roses are gathered; they will brighten the breakfast-table. At length, loaded with spoil from every flowering shrub in his way, he crosses the brook on a plank, only to lose himself in the new growth on the other side; and finally he turns back, springs across and hurries forward, coming out by the bridge at the very place from which he started. It has not taken long, but the sun is up and the small house-hold is astir.

At the breakfast-table Merry and Aldine ventured to complain: "Why did not Quince waken us? We wanted to see the ravine. It has been a long time since we were there. Doesn't it look all grown up and full of tangles?"

Quince explained that the spring showed a quick growth, but the brook was there with its eddies and cascades and trout-covers. Of course he had given everything there a hasty look; he would go again, and they would all go, with their rods and fishing-tackle, and possibly Mr. Dibell would join them, as he had done last summer.

"Oh, he will," was the exclamation; "he comes out every week. But we don't have such good times as we used to when you were here, Quince."

Mr. Chase had his rest-days, as he had said to Quince—days when he enjoyed following up the brook with his rod, picking up a trout now and then, or stretched at his length under the thick canopy of leaves, telling some adventure of his youth, or asking Quince concerning his present studies and his hopes for the future. In it was the routine of school duties became known to him, and his interest was likewise awakened and his sympathy given in the episode of Hatham and Frank Belden.

"The Hathams are an old family; none better in the country. Only one fault they had; father and son, it was all the same. And Haverall I have always known. 'Belden' you called him? Then he must be a son of Haverall's sister. Now I think of it, it occurs to me that one did marry a Belden," Mr. Chase said.

CHAPTER XXIX.

QUINCE'S OPINION OF A SERMON.

Mr. Dibell's freedom from self-restraint; his love of nature, as shown in following up her haunts, seeking out her hiding-places, imbibing her spirit, and winning from her choice treasures,—were means of strength to him. Quince realized this the first time he heard him in the pulpit after his return.

The round world to him was but a pulsation, a heart-throb, of the Great Architect: "He spake, and it was done. He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. Then the channels of waters were seen and the foundations of the world were discovered." It was God, all God, to whom he all power and glory.

Then he spole and his intellect and his capacity for knowledge, the stars, and to the length of their light to rest; but man thought flash in an instant making known with like ease. He pictured in his law and settled without grating.

It was a da swift glance from the silence was deemed as if the course. Once I reference to the he condemned sins of the fa dion unto the But Mr. D yance, though At length, the pulpit, in a v tinned: "I have fou Wrought to unusual for hi sympathetic t for the declara "For God so his only begot lieveith in hi everlasting lif sweet assuranc you. For ev eth."

Then Mr. I ly-persuasive wants and nee hopes and fee reaching out solatio: "All this is There are fev long enough battlefield, wi each other— Our own he conflict; it i thoughts and and see if it warring with tion reaching stayd on Co cessity for G "more earnest have heard, them slip."

Again Qui faces near hi want? Did found? Did surety and t them from tl The next r er's aim was plain to the h made the si was for the l vitation was y saved, aln, and he your sins be as snow; th they shall b "It was a in the audie who had n living speak power after the heart a was earnest There was oratory to d ister simply of God slat It was the and the invi are ready, a and besavee The rain' dows when standing in of his form out; he car was button and there i eyes and m "I am d he said to C