

Father and Daughter.

With gradual gleam the day was dawn-
ing.

Some lingering stars were seen,
When swung the garden gate behind
us—

He fifty, I fifteen.

The high-topped chaise and old gray
pony

Stood waiting in the lane;
Lidly my father awayed the whip-lash,
Lightly he held the rein.

The stars went softly back to heaven,
The night-fogs rolled away,
The rims of gold and crowns of crimson
Along the hill-tops lay.

That morn the fields, they surely never
So fair an aspect wore;
And never from the purple clover
Such perfume rose before.

O'er the hills and low romantic valleys
And the flowery by-roads through,
I sang my simple songs familiar,
That he might sing them, too.

Our souls lay open to all pleasure,
No shadow came between,
Two children busy with their leisure—
He fifty, I fifteen.

As on my couch in languor, lonely,
I weave beguiling rhyme,
Comes back with strangely sweet re-
membrance,
That far-removed time.

The slow-paced years have brought sad
changes,

That morn and this between;
And now, on earth, my years are fifty,
And his in heaven, fifteen.

—Atlantic Monthly.

NEMO

OR

The Wonderful Door.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CHRISTIE'S OLD
ORGAN."

CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

In the dead of night, with the greatest secrecy, the babies had been changed; a little white coffin was made for the body of the gardener's child, and it was taken to Enyland with those of poor Mr. Oakley and his young wife, and was buried with them at Everton in the family vault.

The gardener, who was a thoroughly dishonest man, had been dismissed from his situation for robbing his master, and he was quite willing to undertake the charge of the child, when he heard how large a sum would be paid to him as hush-money. He and his wife, therefore, with the great bribe in their pockets, left the place immediately, taking the poor little baby with them. Before they left, Mark asked what name was to be given to the child; and his master said, "Nemo; for that meant nobody, and he was to be nobody now." Whether he said this in jest, or whether he really meant the child to have the name, Mark did not know, but he repeated what his master had said to the gardener's wife, the night before she left the town. He did not ask her where she was going, nor did he care to know. But before she set off he gave her some clothes for the child, which the poor dead mother had prepared for it.

Not long after this, Mr. Oakley's father, the old Master of Everton, died, and Mr. Gilbert Prescott went to take possession of his ill-gotten estate. Mark had left his service some time before, for he was now a man of means, with a yearly income so large that he could afford to live like a gentleman.

But his prosperity did not last long. The fatal day came round, and the bribe was paid a second time; but only a month afterwards Mr. Gilbert Prescott was struck dead by lightning, and went to give in his guilty account to God. Mark was now left with the burden of a fearful secret resting on him, and with no possibility of any further gain from it. He travelled about Europe for a time; he went to the foreign gaming-tables, in order, if possible, to increase his hoard, but instead of increasing it he lost everything, and returned penniless and beggared to England. He was miserable and in despair.

He took another situation, robbed his master of some jewels, fled in the night, and had been in hiding ever since, an outcast and a homeless wanderer. His conscience had been very uneasy, yet to the end he had hankered after the money he had lost. He had haunted Everton, with the idea of revealing his secret to

the present owner, in the hope of obtaining from him a bribe to hold his tongue; but the more he hung about the place, the more he became convinced that those in possession were far too honourable to entertain the idea of dishonesty; he felt persuaded that if he told them the story, they would make it public at once.

Whilst he was wandering about in this miserable state, one night, on the lonely moors, he had seen their caravan standing by the heather. Looking in, and hoping to find shelter till morning, he had heard the name Nemo, and had seen the little boy, so like his father that he had felt convinced that he was indeed the same child. Yet what course to take he did not know—he could not resolve; all he could determine was that he would not lose sight of the child—he would discover how and where he could be found if he wanted him. He left the dog, which he had called Nemo after the child, and he left the ring, which he had taken from the poor dead father's finger, and which bore the initials of Nemo's grandmother, to whom it had belonged. He thought that by this means he would be able to discover Nemo, even if he should lose sight of him for a time. He also followed him to the town, and found out where he was living, and at length he determined to get possession of him—to get him entirely in his own hands; and then, after extracting from him a promise of reward, he intended to see him righted and put into possession of Everton.

But illness had come on, and death was near; and now Abel must do what he had meant to do. He must at once, without any delay, fetch the clergyman and a magistrate, that he might tell his tale to them, and might hand over to them letters from his master, Mr. Gilbert Prescott, and other papers in his possession, which would establish Nemo's claim before any judge in the land.

The clergyman and magistrate were accordingly summoned, and heard the whole story; and when they had read the papers, they assured the dying man that they would have no difficulty in obtaining for the child his lawful rights and possessions.

When they had gone, Mark turned over wearily on his pillow, and called for Nemo.

"Knock again, Nemo," he whispered. "Knock again."

And little Nemo knelt by his side, and prayed—

"Oh, Lord, open to him! he does want to come inside; forgive him all his sin, for Jesus Christ's sake. Oh, do not turn him away! let him enter now."

And even as Nemo prayed the soul of the strange man passed away.

That afternoon Abel and Nemo were driven back in the high cart to the town, and put down at Amos' door. The dog, which had lain by his dead master's side till the cart was about to start, followed them at Nemo's call, and went up with them to Amos' attic.

It was a glad surprise for the old man when they came in together, Abel and Nemo hand in hand, and the dog bounding in front of them. Amos was rejoiced that Abel was better, and his joy at seeing the child again was more than words can say. But when, after telling Nemo's strange story, Abel went on to say, "There's another thing, Amos and Nemo, that I want you to know, and it is this. I've been a long time about it, but I've got up to the door at last, and I've knocked, and I believe he has let me in!" Then, when he heard this, the old man fairly broke down.

"I've prayed for it for years," he said, between his sobs of joy, "and it's come at last."

And Nemo put his arms round Abel's neck, and whispered—

"I am so glad, Abel! Now we shall always be together—you and me!"

It was not long before Nemo's claim was satisfactorily proved before the proper authorities. The clergyman and magistrate who had received the dying man's testimony undertook the whole business, and greatly relieved poor little Abel's mind by doing so.

When the Charlesworths, the family who were in possession of Everton, heard what had happened, they behaved nobly and honourably. They made no attempt to contest Nemo's claim; but they offered either to leave Everton at once, and give it up to the rightful heir, or, if Nemo's advisers approved, they would rent the estate until he was of age and able to look after it himself. In the meantime, if this second proposal was accepted, they offered the child a home at Everton, and they promised to educate him and train him as if he were a child of the family.

When these two offers were laid by the lawyer before Abel, Nemo at first strongly objected to the second one. He could never leave Abel, he said, never.

Abel had loved him when no one else loved him, he was his own dear father, and he would never, never forsake him. But Abel was decidedly on the other side, and he was firm as a rock in his opinion. Nemo must go to Everton; he must be trained, and educated, and brought up to the position which he would have to fill. He must forget his old surroundings, and begin an entirely new life. Still Nemo wept and sobbed, and declared he could never leave his foster-father.

But kind Mrs. Charlesworth, when she heard of the child's trouble, saw a way out of the difficulty. There was a little cottage in a plantation not far from the Hall, which was empty. She would fit it up and furnish it, and make it comfortable for the little man, and Mr. Charlesworth promised to employ him as caretaker and overlooker of numbers of young pheasants and partridges, which were reared year by year in that plantation, in order to keep the different woods on the estate supplied with game.

Then Nemo was satisfied. Abel would be near him, he could see him every day, and many times in the day; and his foster-father, instead of having to toil round the country with his baskets alone, would have pleasant and easy work to do, and would live in comfort and plenty. And when it was further arranged that Father Amos should be driven in an easy carriage to Everton, and should live with Abel, that the dwarf might have a companion with him in the long evenings, and might have a friend to whom he could always speak, Nemo's heart was full of love and gratitude to Mrs. Charlesworth, who had so tenderly considered his trouble. The dog was to live in the cottage with Abel, so that he would not now be parted from any of his old friends.

It was a very happy childhood which Nemo spent at Everton. He and the little pink girl became the best of friends. Hand in hand they went to the woods in spring to gather blue hyacinths and yellow primroses for Father Amos; together they wandered, in summer, down the shady avenue, or played by the margin of the lake; side by side they sat in the village church on Sunday, and peeped at Abel from the squire's pew; their lessons, their games, their very thoughts, they shared with each other.

No one was more kind to Nemo, or more anxious to help the boy to become all that the master of Everton ought to be, than was Arnold Charlesworth, the one who would have inherited the property if Nemo had not been found. Arnold was a true servant of Jesus Christ, and no thought of disappointment or jealousy was harboured for a moment in his generous heart.

So time went on, and Nemo, who had been called after his father's name of John, grew up a fine and healthy boy. It was a great trial to Abel, and to Amos, and to the whole family at the Hall, when it was settled that it was time he was sent to school; but the holidays were glad times to which they could look forward, and the boy did well and rose rapidly in the school, and showed that he had great power for learning, and brought home prize after prize, which he exhibited with great delight to his kind friends at Everton. Poor Abel would turn these prizes over and over, and would say again and again, "Well, I never! And this is my little Nemo, is it?"

From school he went to college, and did so well there that all who loved him had good reason to be proud of him. And thus the years have rolled on, and now the time is rapidly drawing near when Nemo will be of age, and when Everton will pass entirely into his own hands. Mr. and Mrs. Charlesworth are very firm on this subject, and will not hear of any alteration in the original plan; they are quite decided in their opinion that it will be right for them to leave Everton so soon as Nemo shall be able to fill the master's place himself.

But the village gossips say—at least, so I have been told—that one at least of the good family—as they call the Charlesworths—will, if she leaves Everton for a time, soon be back there again. There is a whisper in the village—and Abel Grey is said to have started it—that Miss Elsie will always have her home in the old mansion and that brighter and gladder days are coming for Everton than have ever been seen there before. So will Nemo be Nobody no longer, but be the centre of a home of love and joy.

And when this little life is over with its cares and its pleasures, its sorrows and its joys, its partings and its meetings, there lies beyond a home of glory for them, and for all those who have come to Christ the door. They will pass inside the gate, and the gate will close behind them.

There, safe from sorrow, safe from sin. With Christ eternally shut in, they will pass the long eternity of fulness of joy.

THE END.

BEDS.

A heap of dry leaves or twigs constituted man's first bed, and a quantity of loose wool, enclosed between two skins, his first mattress. Such, in fact, was the origin of that indispensable article of furniture called bed, in which man passes half his existence. Whether made of stone, as in the East, or of plaster or of oak, walnut, ebony, mahogany or rose-wood, as amongst the more civilized or refined western nations, or more or less elegantly worked iron, as is the modern taste, beds have always been of much the same form, supplying the means of the repose which can only be obtained in the horizontal position. The history of beds becomes interesting during the sixteenth century. They had previously been monumental and severe, but under Francis I. they became elegant, light and richer, and in place of oak or walnut, such woods as maple, palissandro, citron and ebony came into fashion, and were adorned with mother of pearl and such precious stones as the lapis-lazuli. Under Louis XIV., beds resumed their monumental aspect, becoming heavy again, though deprived of none of their ornamentation. The style changed under the Regency. Beds then had headboards padded like sofa backs, and covered with rich damask. Light-coloured chintz on velvet curtains or damasked silk used to hang round the couch from the plume-bedecked canopy. During the reign of Louis XVI., beds underwent a considerable transformation. The hangings remained the same, but the bed itself was ornamented with garlands and carving, and retained its cachet of original elegance. The wood-work, however, was of ordinary white wood, painted gray, picked out with blue—a simple but tasteful mixture of colour. The revolution of 1789 effected noteworthy changes in most things, and amongst others in furniture in general and beds in particular. No ornamentation, no carving, no inlaying with precious stones, no chintzes, tapestry or silk. Cotton replaced them. Democratic America inundated Europe with its cheap calicoes, which housewives found advantageous substitutes for linen and silks. The wood-work of beds was then of walnut, but mahogany, imported in large quantities from the New World, soon took the place of the latter. In still later times the style of the bed has partaken somewhat of every fashion, and all sorts of wood—walnut, oak, palissandro, mahogany, cherry, citron and rose—are employed, while iron is beginning to oust the softer substance from public favour.

CIGARETTE SMOKING.—A BOY'S UNTIMELY DEATH.

Tobacco-smoking, like opium-smoking, is an unnatural vice, as well as a filthy habit. It cannot even be said in its defence, as in the case of liquor-drinking, that it is a mere abuse of a natural appetite; for, at the best, it is an ingenious mechanical contrivance for introducing a poison into the system, and damaging the powers of the brain. It is wholly an acquired habit, and its increasing prevalence is mainly due to the monkeyish love of imitation on the part of little folks who have seen larger folks indulge in it.

Its most perilous form is found in cigarette-smoking by those who are still in physical immaturity. Now and then an illustration of its pernicious influence stands out in startling prominence; but it is the great sweep of its evil, rather than its particular instances of destructive power, that is cause for profoundest alarm and sorrow.

Just at present the newspapers are telling of a lad, of sixteen years, who died in St. Joseph's Hospital, Brooklyn, as a victim of this vice. He "was a chorister in one of the Brooklyn churches." He is said to have been, in the main, "an exemplary lad"—his only marked fault lying in his cigarette-smoking. When brought to the hospital, his very fingers were jaundiced with the tobacco smoke he had taken into his system. His sufferings were excruciating. Just before he died, he said, pitifully: "I wish that all boys who smoke cigarettes could see me now."

These warning words could be well repeated, by parents and teachers, to boys whom they know to be in danger of a similar ruin; and they will have added force when spoken by one who says: "And my example shall no longer be given in favour of this vice."—S. S. Times.