

was just the result of wounded pride; and he is so persuaded that it is his bounden duty now to marry you that he will pursue you unremittingly till he brought you to consent. There is but one way by which you can put an end forever to a position so injurious as that in which you now stand. Raymond asked me to bring him your answer; let—"

"He asked you to bring my answer!" interrupted Estelle; "could he so lower me in your eyes?"

"Yes; he was so convinced you would at once grasp at the offer he made that he did not doubt I should return with your consent; and, I tell you—oh, believe me! there is but one step you can take which will free you from his unendurable pity; let me go back to him and tell him that you are my promised wife, and therefore you refuse him, and run no risk of being supposed to love him unasked. Then, and then only, will he think that he has been mistaken, and cease to follow you wherever you go with his unwilling generosity. Beloved Estelle," continued Hugh, as she retreated back from him, with a look almost of terror in her eyes, "do not refuse that which will alone save you from an indignity that would make life a torture to your delicate spirit and sensitive heart; while in granting my prayer, you will reward at last the devoted changeless love which you well know I have given you unreservedly from the first hour I knew you, and you shall be happy—I will make you so, if the ceaseless offering of my whole being can avail to brighten all your days. Do not refuse to trust me with your future. I know you cannot love me now, but only say you will be my wife; only give me the right to shield you from Raymond's cruel compassion and the world's malignant comments; and in time—in time—it cannot fail but that you should cease to think of the man who could not understand your value, and turn with tenderness to him who would die a hundred deaths for you." He stopped, gazing with haggard eyes into her face, waiting for her answer, as if life or death in that very instant depended on it.

"I suppose I should consider you kind to be willing to take as your wife one who is an object of pity to another man," she said with a pathetic scorn as much of her own position as of his madness in broaching such a scheme at such an hour; "but after all these months of intercourse it seems strange you should know me so little as to imagine I could profane the sacredness of marriage by making it an expedient to escape from any evil, be it what it might. When I told you, months ago that my heart had not chosen you as the one and only one to which I could give my best affections, you promised me that if I would let you still be near me as a friend you would never allude to the subject again, or retain a hope that I could change, and now you have broken your promise in the very moment when it was least justifiable that you should do so. I give you no other answer than I gave you then, and henceforth we must meet no more."

"Estelle, Estelle! do not tell me I have failed!" he exclaimed almost beside himself. "If you knew how I have laboured to win you, how I have struggled, how—" he checked himself as he was about to say, "how I have sinned"—"you could not drive me from you in despair. I know that if I do not gain your consent this night to my prayer that you will be my wife for the sake of your own pride, your own self-respect, I never shall win it. Surely you see what a miserable position is yours! surely you see that I alone can save you from it!"

"I can save myself, Mr. Carlton, and I shall do so," said Estelle, with a resolute dignity, which subdued him in spite of himself; "but I can bear no more of this unseemly discussion; it must end, and I beg you to leave me at once. For such kindness as you have wished to show me, I thank you; and for any pain I have given you, I ask you to forgive me, but after such a conversation as this which has now taken place between us we can never meet again. I wish you every happiness in this life and the next, and now farewell!"

"Estelle!" he cried out, "I cannot—" She stopped him by pointing with an imperious gesture to the door. Again he made one wild attempt to speak and then she moved to the bell, and laid her hand upon it. He could not stand

being dismissed by a servant; he cast one glance of exceeding bitterness upon her face; then turned staggering like a man bewildered, and went out. Estelle waited till she heard the door close, then rushed down the passage towards it, locked and doubled locked it, and, coming back to the sitting room bolted herself in there; then she went towards the rug in front of the fire, where she had last sat with Raymond, and where her great dog Bruin lay extended, with his huge head resting on his paws, while his loving intelligent eyes watched her every movement. Down on her knees she went beside him, and flinging her arms round him she hid her burning face upon his neck while all her bitter humiliation and indignant despair broke out in a passionate burst of tears as she cried in her anguish, "Oh my poor dog, you are my only friend, my only protector! Oh, Bruin, Bruin! henceforth I have none on earth but you!"

Meanwhile out into the dark night went Hugh Carlton, stumbling down the steep path which led to the shore feeling himself beaten, disgraced, despairing! all hope he knew was utterly at an end; he had sinned in vain; he had become the object of his own self scorn, only to find that he had lost, not Estelle alone, but honor, truth, and principle, which he had recklessly sacrificed in the mad attempt to win her; and doubtless he had utterly destroyed her happiness and that of Raymond, by his subtle falsehoods, and yet not gained his own; never could he even undo the evil he had done. How, with such a load of mean and cruel wickedness upon his conscience could he ever hold up his head among his fellow-men? Like a flash of lightning, some inward heaven-sent gleam showed the soul of Hugh Carlton to himself, and the sight appalled his better nature. When he reached the shore he flung himself face downward on the sand, and there he lay going over his whole past life, which had begun in self indulgence and self will, and had brought him at this hour to be, in his own eyes, the most despicable of human beings. He thought of what he might have been, of his neglected, his wasted days, all spent for one unattainable earthly good, and in his bitter overwhelming depression, it seemed to him as if he had sunk too low ever to rise again to any good or noble life. Hour after hour he lay there in his misery, and gradually exhaustion supervened, and he slept. The air was damp and cold, and though he lay out of reach of the tide, the spray from the waves fell in showers over his prostrated form. So he remained till the morning broke.

(To be continued.)

Children's Department.

EASTER OFFERINGS.

We bring our flowers, our rose's red,
Our lily's vestal sweetness,
Our pale Spring violet's bended head,
Our passion-flower's rare meetness;
We lay them on Thine altar-stone—
Nor these alone!

We bring our silver and our gold,
Our overflow of splendor,
Our tithe of harvests manifold,
Our pence of babies tender;
We lay them on Thine altar-stone—
Nor these alone!

We bring our joy, our love, our praise,
Our happy youth's brief glory,
The first ripe fruits of later days,
Our best of song and story;
We lay them on Thine altar-stone—
Nor these alone.

We bring our grief, our lonely years,
Our loves on idols wasted,
The salt and bitter of our tears,
Our wine all spilled ere tasted—
Thou see'st them on Thine altar-stone
And thou alone.

O wondrous grace! O Love Divine!
The altar turns to table!
The bread is broken, poured the wine,
We feast as we are able;

Seeing nor board nor altar stone,
But thee alone.

We eat and drink thy deathless love,
Our eyes behold Thy glory;
We watch Thy bleeding hands remove
The blots from our life's story:
Prostrate we fall before Thy throne—
Nor we alone!

Down through the ages pours a throng
Of saints and martyrs olden;
Swift angels come on pinions strong—
A cloud of witness golden!
Our Saviour, Master, King, we own
In Thee alone,

THE OLD HEN AND HER FAMILY.

There was once a big white hen who had twelve little chickens, and they were all just as good little chickens as you ever saw. Whatever their mother told them to do they did.

One day this old hen took her children down to a small brook. It was a nice walk for them, and she believed the fresh air from the water would do them good. When they reached the brook, they walked along by the bank for a little while, and the old hen thought that it looked much prettier on the other side, and that it would be a good thing for them to cross over. As she saw a large stone in the middle of the brook, she felt sure that it would be easy to jump on the stone, and then to jump to the other side. So she jumped to the stone and clucked for her children to follow her. But, for the first time in their lives, she found they would not obey her. She clucked and flapped her wings, and cried to them in hen-talk:

"Come here, all of you! Jump on this stone as I did. Then we can go to the other side. Come now!"

"Oh mother, we can't, we can't, we can't, said all the little chickens.

"Yes you can if you try," clucked the old hen. "Just flop your wing as I did and you can jump over easy enough."

"I am a-flopping my wings," said one little fellow named chippy, who stood by himself in front, but I can't jump any better than I did before."

"I never saw such children," said the old hen. "You don't try at all."

"We can't try mother," said the little chicks. "We can't jump so far. Indeed, we can't we can't, we can't, we can't!" chirped the little chicks.

"Well," said the old hen, "I suppose I must give it up;" and so she jumped back from the stone to the shore, and walked slowly home, followed by all her family.

"Don't you think mother was rather hard on us?" said one little chicken to another as they were going home.

"Yes," said the other little chick. "Asking us to jump as far as that, when we haven't any wing feathers yet, and scarcely any tails."

"Well I tried my best," said Chippy. "I flopped as well as I could."

"I didn't," said one of the others. "It's no use to try to flop when you've got nothing to flop."

When they reached home, the old hen began to look about for something to eat, and she soon found, close to the kitchen-door, a nice big piece of bread. So she clucked, and all the little chickens ran up to her, and each one of them tried to get a bite at the piece of bread.

"No, no!" cried the old hen. "This bread is not for all of you. It is for the only one of my children who really tried to jump to the stone. Come Chippy! you are the only one who flopped. This nice piece of bread is for you."

—A little child was once asked, "Where do you live?" Turning towards its mother, who stood near by, the little one said, "Where mamma is, there's where I live."

—The secret pleasure of a generous act is the great mind's great bribe.—*Dryden.*