

face, a bitter sense of his own selfishness and neglect rushed upon him. How blind he had been, how heartless, how cruel! And now—now—if he should be too late to atone for it all, if his child should be taken from him! With a sob of remorse he sank upon a chair, and covered his face with a trembling hand.

Dr. Hayward called again later on, but as yet there was no change in little Cyril. He was weaker, if anything, and the doctor feared that his strength would not enable him to battle with the crisis.

Scarcely had he left than there was another ring at the door. It proved to be Mrs. Weston, a friend and neighbor of the

work in that room during those lonely hours; the scales had fallen from Eric Masters's eyes, and he saw clearly the abyss to which he was hurrying.

What would he have given now to recall the ill-spent past! It came home to him sharply that his intemperate habits had been the cause of much misery to his patient wife, that he had even deprived his boy of many little comforts. And as he thought of the little fellow lying there upstairs on the point of death, his spirit was overwhelmed within him. Falling upon his knees he cried out to God, in the anguish of his soul, to spare his child.

It was not until the cold light of dawn

wide awake; and though still very weak, was prattling in his pretty, childish way to his mother. His little face lit up with joy as he saw his father enter.

'Oh, daddie!' he cried, stretching out his arms to him, 'I'm so glad you have come at last! You'll stay with me now, daddie, won't you?'

'That I will, my little man.'

'An'—an' you'll take care of mummie, won't you? She cries so when you are away! An' it makes me very, very sorry to see her cry.'

For answer, Eric Masters turned and took his wife in his arms. For the first time in many months her weary head rested upon his breast, and she gave way to her newfound joy in a flood of tears. In that moment the gulf which had separated them seemed to be spanned. The little child had led them back to each other's arms, to the love they had formerly known.

'Eric,' she whispered, presently, 'you won't allow yourself to be enticed away from us again, will you?'

'Never again, Lucy!' he answered, in a broken voice. 'Never again, with God's help!'

And he kept his word.

[For the 'Messenger.'

### The Music of the Flowers.

Once upon a time it fell,  
I recall the day so well,  
When one evening late in June,  
Lighted by a slender moon,  
Earth and nature seemed asleep,  
And o'er all the stars did peep,  
Looking down with sleepless eye,  
From their watchtower in the sky.  
While upon a mossy bank  
For repose I weary sank.  
All so still about me lay,  
Far more beautiful than day,  
And the air so sweet did seem,  
It was almost like a dream  
Of what rest in Heaven might be,  
When from earth the soul is free.

As I lay half dreaming there  
Drinking in the scene so fair,  
Some bewitching, subtle spell  
All about mysterious fell,  
Soft, sweet voices then I heard,  
And the branches o'er me stirred,  
Clapped their leafy hands and sang  
While the vale with music rang,  
And the mosses at my feet  
All joined in the chorus sweet.  
Then a strain came from afar,  
As though from the evening star,  
And the flowers all about  
Joined in such a merry shout  
That I turned my head to see  
What the cause of this might be.

And I saw a sight so gay  
As was never seen by day;  
Flowers of every shade and hue  
Tripping lightly o'er the dew.  
Blue bells ringing out in glee,  
Clover blossom fair to see,  
Yellow buttercups stood high  
Looking straight into the sky,  
And the common daisy white  
With its heart of gold so bright,  
Mignonette was plainly dressed,  
Though she always wore her best,  
But her breath so sweet exhaled  
That the roses almost failed,  
And carnations even paled,  
As their long green leaves they trailed.

But the pansy's modest face,  
Unadorned by ruff or lace,



WITH A GASP FOR BREATH HE FELL FULL LENGTH ON THE FLOOR

Masters', and a kindly, sympathetic, motherly soul, whose heart was wholly given to God's service. Knowing that Lucy was worn out with anxious watching, she had come to sit up with the boy during the night, so as to allow the tired mother to take a much-needed rest.

Lucy, though nothing would induce her to retire from the sick room, was sincerely glad to have the company of a friend during her long, anxious vigil. In silence they took their place at the bed-side, to watch for the critical moment which would decide the question of life or death.

Downstairs, in his study, Eric Masters paced restlessly to and fro, his mind on the rack, sorrow and remorse gnawing at his heart. The books which he had taken out for perusal lay unopened on his desk.

Every moment he dreaded to hear a quick footstep overhead, to learn that there was a change for the worse, and to be sent off in haste for the doctor.

All through the long, silent watches of that anxious night he continued to pace his room in a tumult of fevered thought. It was a night such as is often a turning-point in a man's life, when he is brought up with a jerk, as it were, on his downward course. The Spirit of God was at

was creeping into the room that he dropped exhausted into his chair, worn out by the long, harassing strain. Laying his arms upon the desk, he rested his heavy, throbbing head upon them, and for a time sleep overpowered him.

He was aroused by the click of the door handle, the rustle of a dress, and the sound of someone entering the room. Starting up he found Mrs. Weston standing close to his desk, dressed, and ready to depart.

'What is it?' he cried, in tones that trembled with apprehension.

'Thank God! The crisis is over,' she answered.

'And he will live? Tell me that he will live.'

'Yes; he will live. God, in his mercy, has spared the dear little fellow to you.'

Eric Masters heard, but for a moment or two he scarcely seemed to realize the joyful news. And then, as it came home to him that God had heard his cry, that the dark hour was over and past, the revulsion of feeling proved to much for him. The room seemed to rock and sway; everything around him became blurred; and, with a gasp for breath, he fell full-length upon the floor.

When he stole upstairs later on, Cyril was