

Left Alone.

It's the loneliest house you ever saw,
This big gray house where I stay;
I don't call it livin' at all, at all—
Since my mother went away.

Four long weeks ago, an' it seems a year,
"Gone home," so the preacher said,
An' I ache in my breast with wantin' her,
An' my eyes are always red.

I stay out of doors till I'm almost froze,
"Cause every corner an' room
Seem empty enough to frighten a boy,
An' filled to the doors with gloom.

I hate them to call me to my meals,
Sometimes I think I can't bear
To swallow a mouthful of anythin',
An' her not sittin' up there,

A-pourin' the tea, an' passin' the things,
An' laughin' to see me take
Two big lumps of sugar instead of one,
An' more than my share of cake.

There's no one to go to when things go
wrong;

She was always so safe an' sure,
Why, not a trouble could tackle a boy
That she couldn't up an' cure.

I'm too big to be kissed, I used to say,
But somehow I don't feel right,
Crawlin' into bed at still as a mouse—
Nobody sayin' good-night—

An' tuckin' the clothes up under my chin,
An' pushin' my hair back so;
Things a boy makes fun of before his
chums,
But things that he likes, you know.

I can't make it out for the life of me,
Why she should have to go,
An' her boy left here in this old gray
house,
A-needin' an' wantin' her so.

There are lots of women, it seems to me,
That wouldn't be missed so much—
Women whose boys are all grown up,
An' old maid aunties, an' such.

I tell you the very loneliest thing
In this great, big world to-day,
Is a boy of ten whose heart is broke,
'Cause his mother is gone away.
—Toronto Globe.

A BOY OF TO-DAY

BY
Julia MacNair Wright.

Author of "The House on the Bluff," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.—Continued.

Heman's twenty-fourth birthday came, and had a most unlooked for and splendid celebration. In the evening they were all asked to tea at Simon Fletcher's, and then and there Simon Fletcher offered Heman a partnership in his business. Uncle Rias pounded the floor with his "patent leg" until the house rang; Aunt D'rexy polished away a few happy tears; Aunt Espey smiled in childlike happy peace, and remarked, "This is just like the Lord's ways of doing things, he never disappoints his people." Then everybody shook hands, and Mrs. Simon Fletcher, a buxom, jolly lady, passed about lemonade and pound-cake. As the Sinnetts went home Heman wondered how it was that the people they passed in the dim gaslight, and the houses shut for the night time, did not yet know of his great good fortune, that he, Heman Leslie, was now one of a big firm, "Fletcher & Leslie, Carpenters and Builders."

"What'll you do for a partner, Uncle Rias?" said Heman, laying his strong brown hand on the old man's shoulder. "I'll have Joey. It'll be, 'U. Sinnet & J. Clump, Carpenters"—not so big sounding as your sign, Heman, but we'll do; we'll get on Joey and me."

"Aunt D'rexy," said Heman next evening, "you've been our banker eight years, and it is time we called you to account. How much have we got laid up for the farm purchase? Bring out your books, dear old lady."

Aunt D'rexy beamed. She found the various books and papers in the pigeon-holes of the old desk, and laid all out under the lamplight. Eight years of savings, but not such a great amount after all. For four years Aunt Espey had done nothing, and Aunt D'rexy had almost ceased to do any work for people outside, as much of her time was needed for Aunt Espey, and Heman and Uncle Rias had concluded that the busy D'rexy worked too hard. The household had been supported comfortably, and Heman had had lessons in drawing

and mathematics at some expense. Aunt D'rexy thought the board a fair one, a round thousand dollars!

"See! all that," she said, presenting a little bank-book that a kindly cashier had kept in clear order for her. It was more than they had expected; the faces of the family fairly shone.

"Uncle Rias," said Heman, "what do you reckon this place worth?"

"I paid two hundred dollars for it about thirty years ago," said Aunt Espey, with her calm child-like smile.

"You mightn't think it, but it's so. I kept exact count," said Aunt D'rexy. "We've spent a hundred and forty dollars here on improvements, not counting the work, because we did that ourselves. There was the brick chimney for the kitchen, the fence, the new pump, the filling in the hollows."

"Yes," said Uncle Rias, "and property has improved here in Windle. It's true this lies low, and is too near the railroad track, but I do say it ought to fetch seven hundred dollars."

"Seventeen hundred then we can see clear," said Heman eagerly. "Twenty-eight hundred will buy back the farm."

"Yes, boy; but mind, a pair of horses, a waggon, farm tools, another cow, some more fowls and pigs, and some sheep would have to be bought if we meant to do any good with the farm when we got it. I'll soon have to stop carpentry, but I could farm if I had half a chance!"

"You're good for a long while yet, dear old man," said Heman, touching his uncle's arm. "Say thirty-three hundred would buy us the farm and restock it. Whew! We need sixteen hundred yet! Never mind; now I'm a partner with Simon Fletcher I can lay up five hundred a year maybe, and you can do the rest, Uncle Rias."

"With God's blessing we'll have our home again," said Aunt D'rexy. "You'll like to be back in your own room, Aunt Espey!"

"Oh, yes; but I'm happy anywhere," said the dear old soul, who after her long, hard-working life had entered days of peace, dwelling serenely in Beulah land, and looking to the golden hills across the river that parts us from life.

It was in that same spring, when all the world was just awaking after the winter's sleep, that the Sinnet family took a holiday and went to visit their friends the Clumps. They found that Mrs. Clump had sent them an unrecieved message that they must stay all night, as she had invited the neighbours for the evening. "You'll have to stay," she said decidedly.

"But there is the cow to milk, and the pig to feed, the fowls to feed and shut up. Why, they have to be seen to," said D'rexy.

"All right, aunt," said Heman, "I'll ride over on horseback and attend to them and be back before you know it." He went off at a pretty good pace, and Mrs. Clump timed him fairly as she thought, while she prepared her supper. Supper was ready and waited; finally they sat down without Heman. Aunt Espey was placid. Uncle Rias said, "Fletcher's stopped him for business," but Aunt D'rexy could not eat. Had anything happened to her boy? Finally he came, rattling along the road, a flame of excitement over all his face. He volubly begged pardon for delays, declared himself starved, was bountifully helped—then could not eat. What did it all mean?

It meant that as he mounted his horse to ride back, a gentleman had asked him, "Who owns this place?"

CHAPTER XIX.

WORKS PRAISING IN THE GATES.

"I do," said Heman, in answer to the stranger's question.

"You look of age, and over," said the stranger.

"Certainly. I'm Leslie, firm of Fletcher & Leslie, Builders."

"Oh! Glad to be talking to a business man. I'm on business. Do you want to sell this place?"

"Why, no," said Heman, "we haven't thought of it. We counted on living here. It suits us pretty well for now."

"I did not come here to dicker or try any sharp tricks," said the gentleman, "but to make a fair, straight-forward bargain. I represent the railroad in the matter in hand. You may have heard that we are going to move our shops? We want to bring them to Windle. The railroad, as you know, owns that piece of land between the cut and Sloane's. We need more, and should buy beside it. Sloane's land is rich, under high cultivation, and has fine buildings; it would command too high a price, and he is probably not willing to sell a portion on any terms. This land of yours is of no especial value except for our purposes, and for them it comes just right.

We would give you more than you would get in any other market. Railroads usually have to pay more than other buyers. We have no time to waste, and no bargaining to do. These small buildings here would serve as well for tool-houses, as we begin work, and you have an acre and a quarter? We will give twenty-five hundred cash down for it, with immediate possession."

It seemed to Heman as if the sky had fallen about him in a rain of parti-coloured stars. He nearly tumbled off his horse, so overpowered was he by the splendid suggestions of the words "twenty-five hundred dollars in cash." That meant the farm back again and plenty to stock it. Two hundred dollars more than Uncle Rias had required. Twenty-five hundred dollars, that was independence!

A life accustomed to doing his duty honourably, and not yielding to passing emotions stood Heman in good stead; he did not fall off his horse or otherwise betray himself; he said calmly, "When I said this place was mine, I spoke as we all do in our family, no man disputing about ownership, but all owning all. When you talk of buying and of deeds, and so on, the place must be sold by my aunt, who really owns it. She will follow exactly the advice we give her. I am sure she will be willing to sell, and will be satisfied with your offer. Still we shall want to consult Lawyer Brace before we advise her. Will you wait until to-morrow noon? At twelve sharp we can give you an answer, at Lawyer Brace's office. I think there is no doubt but we shall make the sale."

"All right, then; until twelve to-morrow, and not an hour longer. Sharp's the word in this business."

It was this conversation that had delayed Heman, and which sent him along the road back to Mr. Clump's in such a happy excitement that his face shone and he could not eat his supper. Neither could he talk sense.

The neighbourhood friends were coming in so soon that he could not begin with the details of the railroad's offer, still he felt that he must tell somebody of the approaching good fortune. Dolly was presently out on the wide back porch washing the tea dishes, while Mrs. Clump, in the dairy-room strained the milk and scalded the pans and pails. The sleeves of Dolly's pink gingham frock were turned back at the elbows; she wore a big coarse linen apron with a bib, and her fingers moved very nimbly as she wiped cups and spoons. Heman leaned against a post of the porch. "Dolly, we can just see the tops of the chimneys of our house over the pasture ridge from here, can't we?" said Heman.

"I wish it was your house," said Dolly, wiping a saucer. "I heard that the people who took it when you left are talking of going West, and nobody knows who'll come in their place. The farm will all run down too, if it is in the hands of careless tenants. Moshier says the house needs painting outside and in, and three rooms ought to be papered. It would cost a hundred dollars, and you know Mr. Sloane hates to spend money. If I had that place I would put a ring seat around that big willow, it has grown so big it looks like a grove; and I'd have an arbour in the back yard; but people who rent won't fix up things that way, and of course Mr. Sloane don't care to do it."

"What else would you do, Dolly?" said Heman, with interest.

"I don't know," laughed Dolly. "I'm not thinking of buying it."

"But I am," said Heman, jubilantly, "soon too—right off! I hope the place is to be vacated so we can go home at once. Don't you tell a word of it, Dolly, until the folks go away this evening, then we must talk it over. I had an offer, a good offer, while I was over there fixing things up for the night. All we've got to do is to close it to-morrow noon, and buy our own old home from Mr. Sloane before night."

Dolly suspended her dish-washing. "Do you think he'll sell it for a fair price?" she asked anxiously.

"I think so. He and Mrs. Sloane have promised, and then I heard he was talking of buying a place by the Normal, and he may like the money."

"Won't you be dreadfully lonely after being so long used to the town? It will seem dull out here, maybe," said Dolly.

"Maybe it won't then. I'll have a horse to ride to my work every day. And, Dolly, here's another secret. Lawyer Brace wants to sell his Surrey for fifty dollars; he wants a new carriage; but this one is as strong as ever, and I can repaint it myself. I mean to buy that, so that Aunt Espey and Aunt D'rexy can get to church comfortably in most any weather."

"You must be getting rich," said

Dolly, piling the clean dishes on a tray. "Are you too proud to empty that dish-pan into the drain for me? I hate to see young men idle."

Heman laughed, emptied the pan, and brought the tea-kettle from the kitchen to pour hot-water over Dolly's dish-towels. Heman was accustomed to all these little services; his Aunt D'rexy had early, taught him to help her in the house.

(To be continued)

The Newspaper on the Farm.

BY MRS. OWEN BALDWIN CAMPBELL.

Poems have been written,
And songs have been sung,
Of lofty deeds of daring,
And the world has fairly rung,
With great and noble efforts,
And victories bravely won,
Tasks grandly finished,
Because so well begun.
But one of the treasures of daily life,
So common, yet so rare,
Like the water we so freely drink,
And the pure life-giving air,
Is the newspaper, with its precious gifts,
And almost magic charm,
As it comes to break the monotony
Of life upon the farm.

Farm life without its presence
Would be a dolly round
Of "John, have you fed the stock?"
"When you goin' to town?"
"Who was that in the waggon?"
"I didn't know the team"
"How much do you guess the hog'll
weigh,
When he comes to tip the beam?"
"Did you take good care
Of the old gray mare?"
"Cuttin' bickory with this dull axe,
Would make a preacher swear"
"Did you hear old Higby say,
When he got back from town,
What hay is brigin' now,
And pork is worth a pound?"
"The old red cow kicked just as if
She meant to break an arm"
But the newspaper, it comes to break
The monotony of the farm.

I wonder how the women lived,
What their lives could have been,
With no magazine or paper,
No sketch from any pen.
Only, "What is butter bringin'?"
"Are your cows a-doing well?"
"Is there anything catchin' your chick-
ens?"
"Jakey is learning to spell,"
"Notice Mrs. Jones' bunnit?
She got it just last week;
Sho an' Miss Raymond's got so mad,
They say they'll never speak."
But the newspaper with its many gifts,
And stories meant to charm,
Comes like a peace-sent message,
To the dwellers on the farm.

On winter evenings when all meet,
And gather 'round the fire,
With bright, expectant faces,
And innocent desire;
The father pleasantly saying,
"Better read the story first;
That feller was in a tight place—
Let's see if he needs a hoarse."
Then next we'll hear the market:
And then the young folks' page:
What they are doing in Congress;
And where the blizzards rage"
"G'an'ma, I'll read the sermon,
You like to hear so well."
"No! Let the rest bear their parts first;
I guess I can wait a spell."
So the newspaper comes with its message
To manhood, age and youth;
With pure, bright thoughts from many
minds,
And many a pleasant truth.

Bedtime is sure to come too soon,
Fatigue is quite forgot;
So many things to talk about,
The daily tasks seem naught.
The young folks still look forward,
To the evenings filled with cheer,
Until, this paper all read through,
The next one shall appear,
The mind that without food becomes
A woody, barren waste,
Grows with the thought it feeds upon,
And forms a healthy taste.
The newspaper, with its precious gifts,
And naught that's meant to harm,
Breaks like a ray of sunshine
The monotony of the farm.

—Midland Christian Advocate.

Aunt— "Do they teach by the object system at your school?"
Little Boy— "Yes'm. They is always objecting to something or other."
Old Farmer— "That's a fine lot of pigs over there. What do you feed them?"
Amateur— "Why, corn, of course."
Old Farmer— "In the ear?"
Amateur— "Certainly not; in the mouth."