

THE HOUSE-TOP SAINT.

BY MRS. J. D. CHAPLIN.

"YES, yes, sonny, I'se mighty fo' handed, and no ways like poo whittet rash, nor yet like any of dese onsanctified cold folk, dat grab deir liberty like a dog grabs a bone—no thanks to nobody."

Thus the sable, queenly Sibyl Melvor ended a long boast of her prosperity since she became her own mistress, to a young teacher from the North, as she was arranging his snowy linen in his trunk.

"I'm truly glad to hear of all this comfort and plenty, Sibyl; but I hope your treasures are not all laid up on earth. I hope you are a Christian," asked the young stranger.

Sibyl put up her great hands, and straightened and elevated the horns of her gay turban; and then, planting them on her capacious hips, she looked the beardless youth in the eye and exclaimed with a sarcastic smile, "I'm hop' I'm a Christian, do you? Why, sonny, I was a 'spectable sort of a Christian afore your mammy was born, I reckon! But, for dese last twenty-five years, I've been a mighty powerful one—no o' de kind dat makes Satan shake in his hoofs. I is one of the house-top saints, sonny!"

"House-top saints! What kind of saints are those?" asked the young North-erner.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Sibyl; "I thought like's not you never he'rd tell on 'em, up your way. Dey's mighty scarce anywhar; but de Lords, not one on 'em at any rate, in dis place and on dis plantation!" replied Sibyl, triumphantly.

"And that's you?"

"Yes, sonny, dat is *me*."

"Then tell me what you mean by being a house-top saint?"

"Well, I mean dat I've been t'rough all de stories o' my Father's house on arth, from de cellar up; and now I'se fairly on de very ruff, yes, on de very ridge pole—and dere I sits and sings and sees heaven, like you never sees it t'rough de clouds down yere."

"How did you get there?"

"How does you get t'rough de parlor, and from de parlor to de chamber, and from de chamber to de stairs? Why, de builder has put sta'rs t'ar, and you sees 'em, and puts your feet on 'em and mounts, ha?"

"But there are the same sta'rs in our Father's house for all His children, as for you, and yet you say house-top saints are very scarce?"

"Sartin, sonny. Sta'rs don't get people up; less dey mounts 'em. If dere was a million o' sta'rs leading up to glory, it wouldn't help dem dat sits at de bottom and howls and mourns 'bout how helpless dey is! Brudder Adam, dere, dat's a blacking o' your boots, he's de husban' o' my bussum, and yet he's nothin' but only a poor down-cellar sciple, sittin' in de dark, and whim' and lamentin' 'cause he ain't upstairs! I says to him, says I, 'Brudder'—I's allus called him 'Brudder' since he was born into de kingdom—" why don't you come up into de light?"

"O," says he, 'Sibby, I'se too unworthy; I don't deserve de light dat God has made for de holy ones."

"Phoo," says I, "dat's de way Adam is! Don't you 'member," says I, "when our massa done married de gov'ness, arter old missus' death? Miss Alice was as poor, as an unfeathered chicken; but did she go down cellar rite 'mong de po'k barr'ls and de trash cause she was poor and wasn't worthy to live up sta'rs? Not she! She tuk her place at de head o' de table, and war all de lacy and jewelry massa gib her, and hold up her head high, like she was sayin', 'I'se no more poor gov'ness, teaching Col'n Melvor's chil'en; but I'se de Col'n's b'loved wife, and I stan' for de mother of his chiln'; as she had a right to sav! And de Col'n love her all de more for her not bein' a fool and settin' down cellar 'mong de po'k barr'ls!"

"Dere, sonny, dat's de way I talk to Brudder Adam! But so fur it haint fetched him up! De deluded creature thinks he's humble, when he's only low-minded and grovelin' like! It's unworthy of a blood-bought soul for to stick in de cold dark cellar, when he mought live in delight and warmth, up on de house-top?"

"That's very true, Sibyl; but few of us reach the house-top," said the young man thoughtfully.

"Mo' fools you, den I!" cried Sibyl. "De house-top is dere, and de sta'rs is dere, and de grand, glorious Master is dere, up 'bove

all, callin' to you day and night, 'Frien', come up higher!' He reaches down His shinin' han' and offers for to draw you up; but you shakes your head and pulls back and says, 'No, no, Lord; I isn't nothing.' Is dat de way to treat Him who has bought life and light for you? Oh, shame on you sonny, and on all de down cellar, an parlor, an' chamber Christians!"

"What are parlor Christians, Auntie?" asked the young man.

"Parlor Christians honey? Why, dem is de ones dat get t'ar out o' de cellar and goes straightway an' forgets what kind o' creatures dey wa' down dere! They grow proud an' d'esses up fine, like de worl's folks, and d'esses, and sings worldly trash o' songs, and has only just 'ligion enough to make a show wid. Our ole missus, she used to train 'mong her cold' folks, wuss den old King Furio did 'mong de 'Gyptians. But, bless you, de minute the parson or any other good brudder or sister come 'long, how she did tune up her harp! She was mighty 'ligious in de parlor, but she left her 'ligion dere when she went out."

"I do think missus got to heaven, wid all her infirmities, but she didn't get very high up till de bride-room come and called for her! Den she said to me, one dead o' night, 'Oh, Sibby,' says she—she held tight on to my han'—'Oh, Sibby, if you could only go long o' me, and I could keep hold o' your garments, I'd have hope o' getting t'rough de shinin' gate!—your clothes, and your face, and your hands shine like silver, Sibby,' says she. 'Dear soul,' says I, 'dis light you see isn't mine!—It all comes 'flected on to poor black Sibyl from de cross; and dere is heaps more of it, to shine on you and every other poor sinner dat will come near enough to catch de rays!'"

"Oh," says she, 'Sibby' when I heard you shoutin' Glory to God! and talkin' o' Him on de house top, I thought it was all substitution and ignorance. But now, Oh, Sibby I'd like to touch de hem o' your garment, and wipe de dust off your shoes, if I could only ketch a glimpse o' Christ."

"Do you believe dat you's a sinner, missus?" says I.

"Yes, de chief o' sinners," says she, with a groan.

"Do you believe dat Christ died for sinners, and is able to carry out His plan?" says I.

"Yes," says she.

"Well, den," says I, 'if you's sinner enough, and Christ is Saviour enough, what's to hinder your being saved? Just you quit looking at yourself, and look to Him!'"

"Den she ketch sight o' de cross, and she forgot herself; an' her face lit up like an angel's; and she was a new missus from dat yar hour till she went up. She died a singing,—

"In my han' no price I bring,
Simply to dy cross I cling."

"But she mought a sung all de way along, if she hadn't forgot the humiliation o' de cellar, and 'oused the privileges o' de parlor. Parlors is fine things, but dey ain't made for folks to spen' deir whole time in."

"What's a chamber-saint, Auntie?" asked the young man.

"Chamber-saints is dem dat's 'scaped de dark and de scare of de cellar, and de honey-traps of de parlor, and got t'rough many worries, and so feels a-tired, and is o' rest. Dey say,—'Well, we's got 'long mighty well, and can now see the way clar up to glory.' And sometimes dey forgets dat dey's only half-way up, and thinks dey's come off conquerors a-ready. So dey's very apt to lie down wid Jeir hands folded, thinkin' dat Satan isn't nowhere now! But he is close by 'em, and he smoooves deir soft pillows, and sings 'em to sleep and to slumber; and de work o' de kingdom don't get no help from dem—not for one while! De chamber is a sort o' half-way house, made for rest and comfort; but some turns it into a roosting-place. You know Brudder Bunyan, sonny?"

"No."

"What, never heard tell o' John Bunyan?"

"Oh, yes."

"I thought you couldn't all be so ignorant 'bout 'ligion up in Boston, as dat! Well, you know he wrote 'bout a brudder dat got asleep and loss his roll, and dat's what's de matter wid heaps o' Christians in de worl'. Dey fall asleep and loses de'r hope."

"And do you keep in this joyful and wakeful frame all the time, Auntie?" asked the young learner.

"I does, honey. By de help of de Lord, and a continual watch, I keep de head ob

de ole sarpint mashed under my heel, pretty gineral. Why, sometimes, when he rises up and thrusts his fangs out, I have such power given me to stomp on him, dat I can hear his bones crack—mostly. I tell you, honey, he don't like me, and he most gin me up for los'."

"Now, Sibyl, you are speaking in figures. Tell me plainly how you get the victory over Satan."

"Heap o' ways," she replied. "Sometimes I gets up in de mornin', and I sees work enough for two women ahead o' me. Maybe my head done ache and my narves is done rampant; and I hears a voice sayin' in my ear, 'Come or go what likes, Sibby, dat ar work is got to be done! You's sick and tired a-ready! Your lot's a mighty hard one, sister Sibby'—Satan often has the impudence to call me 'sister'—and if Adam was only a pearter man, and if Tom wasn't lame, and if Judy and Cle'patry wasn't dead, you could live mighty easy. But just you look at dat are pile o' shirts to iron, 'sides cookin' for Adam and Tom, and keepin' your house like a Christian oughter!' Dat's how he 'sails me when I'se weak! Den I faces straight about and looks at him, and says, in de word o' Scripiter, 'Clar out and get ahind my back, Satan! Dat are pile o' shirts ain't high enough to hide Him dat is my strength!' And sometimes I whisks de shirts up and rolls 'em into a bundle, and heaves 'em back into de clothes basket; and says to 'em, 'You lay dar till to-morrow, will you? I ain't no slave to work, nor to Satan! for I can 'ford to wait, and sing a hymn to cheer up my sperits, if I like.' And den Satan drops his tail, and slinks off, most gineral; and I goes 'bout my work a singing:—

'My Master bruise de sarpint's head,

And bind him wid a chain;

Come, brudders, hololuhah shout,

Wid all yer might and m in!

Hololuhah!"

"Does Satan always assail you t'rough your work?" asked the stranger.

"No, bless you, honey; sometimes he tacks me t'rough my stummock; and dat's de way he tacks rich and grand folks most gineral. If I eat too hearty o' fat bacon and corn cake in times gone, I used to get low in 'ligion, and my hope failed, and I den was such a fool I thought Christ had forgotten to be gracious to me! Satan makes great weapons out o' bacon! But I knows better now, and I keep my body under, like Brudder Paul; and nothing has power to separate me from Him I loves. I'se had sorrows enough to break a dozen hearts dat had no Jesus to shar' 'em wid, but every one on 'em has only forced me nearer to Him. Some folks would like to shirk all trouble on deir way to glory, and swim into the shinin' harbor t'rough a sea of honey! But, sonny, dere's crosses to bar, and I ain't mean enough to want my blessed Jesus to bear 'em all alone. It's my glory here dat I can take hold o' one end o' de cross, and help Him up de hill wid de load o' poor, bruised, and wounded, and sick sinners He's got on His hands and His heart to get up to glory! But, la, honey, how de time has flew; I must go home and get Brudder Adam's dinner; for it's one o' my articles o' faith never to keep him waiting beyond twelve o'clock when he's hungry and tired, for dat allus gise Satan fresh vantage over him. Come up to my place some day, and we'll have more talk about de way to glory."

PADDLE YOUR OWN CANOE.

Judge S. gave his son a thousand dollars, tellin' him to go to College and graduate. The son returned at the end of the Freshman year without a dollar and with several ugly habits. About the vacation the Judge said to his son:

"Well, William, are you going to College this year?"

"Have no money, father."

"But I gave you a thousand dollars to graduate on!"

"It's all gone, father."

"Very well, my son; it was all I could give you; you can't stay here: you must pay your own way in the world."

A new light broke in upon the vision of the astonished young man. He accommodated himself to the situation; he left home, made his way through college, and graduated at the head of his class, studied law, became Governor of the State of New York, entered the Cabinet of the United States, and has made a record for himself that will not soon die, being none other than William H. Seward.

CHILD CRIMINALS.

A correspondent of the *Globe* who is evidently a close observer, and has had opportunities for studying the habits of the street children of our city, publishes some astounding revelations, the correctness of which has not been challenged. We republish the particulars as given by the writer, whom we believe to be a clergyman, in the hope that the attention and efforts of the Christian public may be devoted to a class of incipient criminals with whom neither law nor police can deal, and who must be influenced, if at all, by that Gospel which inculcates purity of life by implanting new motives and desires in the soul—removing stony hearts, and giving hearts of flesh. As a rule, says the writer, the children beg a few cents, with which they buy papers. These they sell in the streets, and soon become acclimatized to the life, prefer its concomitants of idleness and scanty profits to going to school and being obliged to stay within doors and under subjection for so many hours. In time they—especially the girls—manage to secure regular customers in their stores and offices, and go round at due intervals to leave their papers. This is often the turning-point for evil. Unconsidered trifles, in the way of odd cents, postage stamps, knives, and the like, lie about within reach, and are eagerly snapped up by the poor little waifs who know the flogging that awaits them if they cannot minister to the degrading wants of their parents, who not unusually are the look-out for them at the nearest corner to screw out of them all they have scraped together and then to send them out again. Hence they first become petty thieves and then thieves on a larger scale. The end is prison—the Penitentiary or the Mercer Reformatory—where, I am sorry to endorse your remarks, the process of corruption continues, and must continue, till a new system of complete isolation of the younger children from the elder obtains. Worse remains behind. The ranks of harlots are swelled by this system of taking no heed to these little ones. In many cases these nearly infant girls are debauched by those clerks and employers who work in these stores and offices, and tempted by a bribe in money. I have known it to be offered in cakes or candies. They yield themselves up daily to the lust of not one or two, but several, of these fellows, some of them married men and church members, and so are harlots almost before they know that they are sinning. The further fall these of children is a matter of course, and only to-day I saw three girls, not one of whom was more than thirteen at the outside, busily engaged in conversation with another, not yet far advanced in her teens, whom I know from more than repute to be the keeper of a notorious bagnio in this city. The police dare not interfere. Many of them have told me how, as fathers themselves, their hearts had bled to see the rapid decline of these poor children from the paths of comparative innocence to those of the foulest uncleanness and the grossest vice. And as with the girls, so with the boys, who are the pickpockets, the burglars, the ravishers and the murderers of the future, and all because of our own supineness in not insisting upon the compulsory clauses of the Education Act being carried out. What is wanted is prevention. Towards this, more truant officers, and not more policemen, must be employed; more schools—industrial if you please—not more reformatories, must be built; more teachers, and not more turnkeys and guards, must be hired. It will cost money to start with; but it will be cheaper in the end to raise good citizens than to pay for the seclusion and incarceration of a profitless criminal population.

The life of a pious minister is visible rhetoric.—Hooker.