

HOUSEHOLD.

Teaching Purity.

(By Frances E. Willard.)

'How early shall we teach? The age will vary, but be sure to let purity have the first word. The child will ask questions early; let not the coarse reply get in its work before the chaste one comes.'

Many of the divinest lovers of all history have lived without marriage and many of the most demoniacal haters have spent their lives in a marriage without love.

The Minister's Mother.

(Susan Hubbard Martin, in the 'Ram's Horn.')

The richest parishioner of the little church told the pastor on prayer-meeting night, that she was going on a journey, and then she spoke of the proposed route.

'Why, your way leads through Finley,' the minister exclaimed, his pale face lighting up, 'and at Finley lives—my mother. I wonder if you could—if you would stop and see her?'

The richest parishioner looked into her pastor's expressive face.

'I am going to stop there two days,' she answered, gently, 'and I shall be very pleased to call upon her. How long since you have seen her?' she queried, still gently.

A shadow crossed the minister's face. 'Five years, in reality, but in spirit I am always with her. My blessed mother! No son has a better one.' Then, with wistful insistence, 'You are sure you will stop at Finley?'

'Very sure, and I will bring you back your mother's every word.'

The richest parishioner arrived in Finley in due time.

'Aunt Katherine,' she said to the elderly relative she was visiting, 'my pastor's mother lives in this town. Perhaps you know her?'

Aunt Katherine, comely and comfortable, was bustling about in the kitchen. 'What is her name?' she asked.

'McDonald—Mrs. Rachel McDonald.'

Aunt Katherine came to the window and pointed to a dwelling only a little distance up the street, small and unpretentious and guarded by a white picket fence.

'Mrs. McDonald lives there,' replied Aunt Katherine. 'I know her well, one of my best neighbors; and almost the oldest inhabitant.'

'Will you go with me to see her, then?' asked the niece.

'Gladly, and whenever you like.'

And so it happened that same afternoon they knocked at Rachel McDonald's door. A woman, large, noble and white-haired, opened it. She glanced at her two visitors, at the older woman with a smile of welcome, at the younger one with gentle kindness, quite unmixed with curiosity.

'My niece—Mrs. Percival—Mrs. McDonald,' announced Aunt Katherine. 'She came to see you because she is from your son's town in the West and a member of his church.'

'Ah!' It was good to see how the beautiful old face lighted up. 'From my son's church. Oh, what a privilege it is to see you! Five years—five years since I last saw him. Is he well—is he quite well? He was never strong—but come in, come in.'

She ushered them into a clean little room with braided rugs about and plants blooming in the windows. A bouquet of carnations stood in a vase on a small table covered with a white cloth.

'I had a birthday last week and my son sent me these. They were quite fresh, all but one and I put that away to press. Malcolm knows how I love flowers. Now sit down and tell me about my boy—of his work, of his wife, of the baby I have never seen.'

And so the richest parishioner, sitting opposite the strong, noble mother in that humble room, told what she knew. She spoke of the minister's Bible class, the young man's league he had inaugurated, the sermons he preached, the souls he had converted, the calls he made, the friends he held, and his kindness to the sick and weak and afflicted.

The old mother sat and listened, losing not a word. Her wrinkled hands were clasped together, her head bent forward.

'It's just as I knew it would be,' she answered dreamily. 'Malcolm was always such a blessing to his mother. And he writes me such letters and tells me how he longs to see me. I don't tell him how my heart hungers for him—it would grieve him, so far away. My boy still, my little boy that I used to rock to sleep—whose prayers I used to listen to. Oh, if I could only gather him in my arms again! And to think my little lad is out in the world helping people. Oh, I am glad, like Hannah of old, that I had him to give to the Lord. It is all right, only the separation is hard.'

And then as she looked into the strong, old face with its lines of character and kindness, the richest parishioner knew whence had come the minister's religion and what a goodly inheritance was his.

'How alike they are,' she mused, 'and how I wish he might see her.'

And then the thought came to her, 'Why not—why not?'

'Kate,' her husband had said to her at parting, 'I'll get tickets for two this time, and then if any one of your friends wants to come back with you just bring her along.'

'But there will be nobody, Ralph,' she answered, 'at this season of the year.'

'Never mind,' he had said. 'An extra ticket won't come amiss and we can afford to be generous. Take it.' And so the matter had ended.

Kate Percival thought of it now. She thought, too, of the overworked pastor with his growing brood, of the salary not large enough for all their needs, and of his look as he had told her of his mother—the deep love reflected in the patient, spiritual face. 'Why shouldn't people who have money use it for those who have not?'

'Mrs. McDonald,' she said, suddenly. 'I have bought an extra ticket, in case I wanted to bring back a friend. Aunt Katherine here won't use it, and will—you? I am going on to my journey's end, but in two weeks I will be back to take you home with me.'

The strong, old face opposite suddenly melted into tears.

'Me!' she cried.

'Why not—you must see your son's church and the parsonage and the baby—and the son himself.'

Kate Percival had risen and had taken hold

of the wrinkled hand. 'You will come, will you not?' she entreated, gently, 'for his sake—he loves you so.'

And so it came that the son who could not go to see his mother had his mother brought to him.

An Eastern train two weeks later steamed into the little Western station. Among the passengers were two people, one woman, young and beautiful, with an older one, wrinkled and white-haired, yet with a commanding grace and dignity all her own.

A man, tall and pale, with eager eyes, was waiting. As she came down the steps of the car, the older woman saw him.

'Mother!' he cried, striding toward her and folding her in his arms. 'Oh, mother, mother.'

'My son,' she whispered, in a choked voice.

He dropped his head upon her breast and the two stood quite still, wrapped in each other's arms. The richest parishioner had turned away, but the next moment the minister grasped her by the hand.

'Let me thank you,' he cried, brokenly.

'Don't,' she entreated smilingly. 'Don't, for if you do, I warn you, I shall — . And then the beautiful lips quivered. 'I—I have no mother, she died two years ago. Can you not see how pleased—what a privilege I deemed it to bring you yours?'

The minister looked into her face and saw the grief that a mother's loss must ever bring.

'God bless you,' he murmured. 'God bless you. Yes, yes, I understand.'

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