

was extending toward the east, and approaching the fire burning on the mountain-top, and the moon rising above and to the left of it; and from beneath its black shadow came a heavy, muffled sound that every moment deepened and intensified.

Suddenly, as if shaken by a giant's hands, the tree-tops above us swayed to and fro; then the shrubbery along the paths seemed full of wild terror, and writhed in every direction.

Hitherto the moon had shone on the cloud with as serene a face as that with which Mr. Yocomb had watched its approach, but now a scud of vapour swept like a sudden pallor across her disk, giving one the odd impression that she had just realized her peril, and then an abyss of darkness swallowed her up. For a few moments longer the fire burned on, and then the cloud with its torrents settled down upon it, and the luridly luminous point became opaque.

The night now alternated between a utter darkness and a glare in which every leaf and even the colour of the tossing roses were distinct.

After the first swirl of wind passed, there fell upon nature round us a silence that was like breathless expectation, or the cowering from a blow that cannot be averted, and through the stillness the sound of the advancing tempest came with awful distinctness, while far back among the mountains the deep reverberations scarcely ceased a moment.

Broken masses of vapour, the wild skirmish line of the storm, passed over our heads, blotting out the stars. The trees and shrubbery were bending helplessly to the gust, and Miss Warren could scarcely stand before its violence. The great elm swayed its drooping branches over the house as if to protect it. The war and whirl of the tempest was all about us, the coming rain reminded one of the re-ounding footsteps of an innumerable host, and great drops fell here and there like scattering shots.

"Come in, my child," said Mr. Yocomb, "the storm will soon be past, and thee and the robins shall yet have quiet sleep to-night. I've seen many such wild times among the mountains, and nothing worse than clearer skies and better grain followed. You will hear the robins singing—"

A blinding flash of lightning, followed by such a crash as I hope I may never hear again, prevented further reassuring words, and he had to half support her into the house.

I had never been in a battle, but I know that the excitement which mastered me must have been akin to the grand exaltation of conflict, wherein a man thinks and acts by moments as if they were hours and years. Well he may, when any moment may end his life. But the thought of death scarcely entered my mind. I had no presentiment of harm to myself, but feared that the dwelling or out-buildings might be struck.

Almost with the swiftness of lightning came the calculation:

Estimating distance and time, the next discharge of electricity will be directly over the house. "If there's cause, which God forbid, may I have the nerve and power to serve those who have been so kind!"

As I thought, I ran to an open space which commanded a view of the farm-house. Scarcely had I reached it before my eyes were blinded for a second by what seemed a ball of intense burning light shot vertically into the devoted home.

"O God!" I gasped, "it is the day of fate." For a moment I seemed paralyzed, but the igniting roof beside the chimney roused me at once.

"Reuben!" I shouted.

A flash of lightning revealed him still seated quietly on the piazza, as if he had heard nothing. I rushed forward, and shook him by the shoulder.

"Come, be a man; help me. Quick!" and I half dragged him to a neighbouring cherry-tree, against which I had noticed that a ladder rested.

By this time he seemed to recover his senses, and in less than a moment we had the ladder against the house. Within another moment he had brought me a pail of water from the kitchen.

"Have two more pails ready," I cried, mounting the low, sloping roof.

The water I carried, and rain, which now began to fall in torrents, extinguished the external fire, but I justly feared that the wood-work had been ignited within. Hastening back at perilous speed, I said to Reuben, who stood ready, "Take one of the pails and lead the way to the attic and the room up-stairs."

The house was strangely and awfully quiet as we rushed in.

I paused a second at the parlour door. Miss Warren lay motionless upon the floor, and Mr. Yocomb sat quietly in his great arm-chair.

A sickening fear almost overwhelmed me, but I exclaimed loudly, "Mr. Yocomb, rouse yourself; I smell fire; the house is burning!"

He did not move nor answer, and I followed Reuben, who was half way up the stairs. It took but a few seconds to reach the large, old-fashioned garret, which already was filling with smoke.

"Lead the way to the chimney," I shouted to Reuben in my terrible excitement. "Do not waste a drop of water. Let me put it on when I find just where the fire is."

Through the smoke I now saw a lurid point. A stride brought me thither, and I threw part of the water in my pail up against it. The hissing and sputtering proved that we had hit on the right spot, while the torrents falling on the roof so dampened the shingles that further ignition from without was impossible.

"We must go down a moment to breathe," I gasped, for the smoke was choking us.

As we reached the story in which were the sleeping apartments, I cried,

"Great God! Why don't some of the family move or speak?"

Hitherto Reuben had realized only the peril of his home; but now he rushed into his mother's room, calling her in a tone that I shall never forget.

A second later he uttered my name in a strange, awed tone, and I entered hesitatingly. Little Zillah apparently lay sleeping in her crib, and Mrs. Yocomb was kneeling by her bedside.

"Mother!" said Reuben, in a loud whisper.

She did not answer.

He knelt beside her, put his arm around her, and said, close to her ear, "Mother! why don't you speak to me?" She made no response, and I saw that she leaned so heavily forward on the bed as to indicate utter unconsciousness.

The boy sprang up, and gazed at me with wild questioning in his eyes.

"Reuben!" I said quickly, "she's only stunned by the lightning. Will you prove yourself a man, and help me in what must be done? Life may depend upon it."

"Yes," eagerly.

"Then help me lift your mother on the bed; strong and gentle, now—that's it."

I put my hand over her heart.

"She is not dead," I exclaimed joyously; "only stunned. Let us go to the attic again, for we must keep shelter this wild night."

We found that the smoke had perceptibly lessened; I dashed the other pail of water on the spot that had been burning, then found that I could place my hand on it. We had been just in time, for there was light wood-work near that communicated with the floor, and the attic was full of dry lumber, and herbs hanging here and there, that would have burned like tinder. Had these been burning we could not have entered the garret, and as it was we breathed with great difficulty. The roof still resounded to the fall of such torrents that I felt that the dwelling was safe, unless it had become ignited in the lower stories, and it was obviously our next duty to see whether this was the case.

"Reuben," I said, "fill the pails once more, while I look through the house and see if there's fire anywhere else. It's clear that all who were in the house were stunned—even you were, slightly, on the piazza—so don't give way to fright on their account. If you do as I bid, you may do much to save their lives; but we must first make sure the house is safe. If it isn't, we must carry them all out at once."

He comprehended me, and went for the water instantly. I again looked into Mrs. Yocomb's room. It was impregnated with a strong sulphurous odour, and I now saw that there was a discoloured line down the wall adjoining the chimney, and that little Zillah's crib stood nearer the scorching line of fire than Mrs. Yocomb had been. But the child looked quiet and peaceful, and I hastened away.

My own room was dark and safe. I opened the door of Miss Warren's room, and a flash of lightning, followed by complete darkness, showed that nothing was amiss.

I then opened another door, and first thought the apartment on fire, it was so bright; but instantly saw that two lamps were burning, and that Adah lay dressed upon the bed, with her face turned toward them. By this common device she had sought to deaden the vivid lightning. Her face was white as the pillow on which it rested; her eyes were closed, and from her appearance she might have been sleeping or dead. Even though almost overwhelmed with dread, I could not help noting her wonderful beauty. In my abnormal and excited condition of mind, however, it seemed a natural and essential part of the strange, unexpected experiences of the day.

I was now convinced that there was no fire in the second story, and the thought of Miss Warren drew me instantly away. I already had a strange sense of self-reproach that I had not gone to her at once, feeling as if I had discarded the first and most sacred claim. I met Reuben on the stairway, and told him that the second story was safe, and asked him to look through the first story and cellar, and then to go for a physician as fast as the fleetest horse could carry him.

(To be continued.)

THE YOUNG MAN FROM HOME.

Take the case of a young man who has not the advantage of a cheerful home, wisely made the abode of genial and innocent recreations. He is alone; he is far from home; he has few acquaintances; his employer takes but little interest in him; his social feelings pine unsatisfied. His fresh and warm affections, which went forth daily over the inmates of his home, are all awake, clamorous, vehement, and pent up in his heart, and in some direction must and will find a true or false gratification. That gushing and living fountain obstructed, and not permitted to go singing and dancing, clear and pure, over its native channel, will break forth with the torrent's rage, and make for itself a new channel, and rush on, turbid and defiled, over the wild precipices of forbidden indulgence, and at last become dispersed, wasted and absorbed. Accountable for the discharge of certain duties at certain times, he accounts to no one but himself for the use to which he may devote his remaining time. Master of himself, lonely, with opportunities and seductions to every species of sin, in every gradation to suit the neophyte and the initiated, how perilous is his situation! Young man, I tremble for your safety! You may enter the hall of fashionable pleasure, and there acquire tastes which may lead to further sin, by having been cheated into the belief that vice has lost half its evil by losing all its grossness; or, you may sit, night after night, at the fascinating and corrupting exhibitions of the theatre; then you will glide into the gathering places of the dissipated and the licentious. And, far away, your mother's heart shall swell to breaking; and her nightly pillow be wet with tears, and her dreams be terrible with visions of your danger and your guilt, when she shall hear of the life you lead. Nay, it shall not be so. Before you have fully entered upon that career, I see your friends approach you; they present themselves with a cheerful aspect; the law of kindness is upon their lips; they call you brother; they lead you to innocent and pleasant places, they make you feel at home; they lead you to the fountain of knowledge; they go with you to the church of God, and it is because of their prayers in your behalf that your heart is arrested and solemnized by the services and the sermons. Lo! you kneel with them to

the Saviour, and the hand which you lift up in gratitude to God, is yet warm with the fraternal grasp of theirs.

And your mother, far away, she praises God for these young brothers, and prays that all good may come to them, and you she holds in her heart's more close and dear embrace, as she presents you to the Saviour, and invokes all blessings on you, and sinks into sweet and tranquil sleep, because God has restored to her a true, pure and holy son. She shall know no joy dearer or deeper than this side of Heaven!

THE BEAUTIFUL.

Beautiful faces are those that wear—
It matters little if dark or fair,
Whole-souled honesty printed there.

Beautiful eyes are those that shew,
Like crystal panes where heath-fires glow,
Beautiful thoughts that burn below.

Beautiful lips are those whose words
Leap from the heart like songs of birds,
Yet whose utterance prudently guards.

Beautiful hands are those that do
Work that is earnest, and brave, and true,
Moment by moment the long day through.

Beautiful feet are those that go
On kindly ministries to and fro—
Down lowliest ways, if God wills it so.

Beautiful shoulders are those that bear
Ceaseless burdens of homely care
With patient grace and daily prayer.

Beautiful lives are those that bless—
Silent rivers of happiness,
Whose hidden fountain but few may guess.

Beautiful twilight, at set of sun;
Beautiful goal, with race well won;
Beautiful rest, with work well done.

Beautiful graves, where grasses creep,
Where brown leaves fall, where drifts lie deep,
Over worn-out hands—oh, beautiful sleep!

PAUL TAKING UP COLLECTIONS.

He did not like to have to do the money-gathering in person. So he asked the churches to have their contributions all ready when he should come to them. It is clear that this is the best way still. Money is thus given without any excitement, or over-persuasion, or emulation, or outside pressure. A man greatly gifted in pathetic and persuasive power can move a congregation to give for some small matter, and to give a great deal more than they do to some one of the great objects of our Christian benevolence. Let us not complain that they give so much to the impassioned and skillful appeal, but let us urge all our churches to give by regular system, that the time and labour of secretaries and other workers may be given to higher duties than mere money-gathering. The churches can save money to themselves by being their own collectors. Let every young convert be taught, at the moment of his entering the church, that he is to be a regular giver to all the objects to which the church contributes. One of the best proofs, we think, of steadfast devotion to Christ, is steady devotion to the grace of giving. Will that ideal ever be realized in this world, when every church shall give to every worthy mission, and every member of the church shall give something? Perhaps we may not hope to reach that perfect state, but we ought to work toward it. We hope, above all, that selfish spirit will be banished from all our churches, that spirit which says, "We have enough to attend to in our church." Let us all remember that the greatest thing we have to attend to in any church is to do God's will and remember His poor saints.—*Hartford Religious Herald.*

A MAN in his calling is twice as strong to resist temptation as one out of it. A fish is twice as strong in the water as on the shore; but a four-footed beast is twice as strong on the land as in the water. The reason is because the water is the proper element of the one, and the earth of the other. Thy work is thy element, wherein thou art able to resist temptation.—*Thomas Fuller.*

IT is a beautiful story which describes a lady and her little daughter passing out of church when the child bade goodbye to a poorly dressed little girl. "How did you know her?" inquired the mother. "Why, you see, mamma, she came into our Sabbath-school alone and I made a place for her on my seat, and I smiled and she smiled, and then we were acquainted." It was but a smile, but it did a great work. The whole Church needs more of these smiles, both because they are so pleasant in themselves, and because they lead to other things so much more important. It is good to be reverent and serious. Both of these are consistent with cheerfulness and the exhibition of the generous spirit which comes out in the brightness of the countenance. Let us have more smiles from old and young and all.

IF it is sense of sin which does not let you be comfortable, turn at once to "Him with whom you have to do." Remember, it is not with Satan that you have to do, nor with your accusing conscience, but with Jesus. He will deal with all the rest; you only have to deal with Him. And He is your great High Priest. He has made full atonement for you, for the very sins that are weighing on you now. The blood of that atonement, His own precious blood, cleanseth us from all sin. Cleanseth whom? People that have not sinned? People that don't want to be cleansed? Thank God for the word, "cleanseth us"—us who have sinned, and who want to be cleansed. And you have to do with Him who shed it for your cleansing, who His ownself bare your sins in His body on the tree.