

rapid degeneracy of man; the Epistles and Gospels inculcate self-discipline and the cultivation of charity, as the necessary complement of all other virtues.

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

The Uncertain Future.

As when skies are fairest,
Storm-clouds oft appear;
So when joys are rarest,
Sorrow may be near.
And while deeply joyous,
Could we look before;
One glance might appal us,
Near the breakers roar!

So when deep in trouble,
Comfort oft is near;
When our days are darkest,
Dawn may soon appear.
Yet so dim the future,
We can never know,
What the next awaits us,
Whether weal or woe.

Thus our Heavenly Father
Hides from our weak view,
What is still before us,
As He leads us through.
He would keep us ever
Looking unto Him;
Faith more brightly shining
When the sight is dim.

L. K. W.

DOROTHY.

(Written for the Church Guardian.)

BY T. M. B.

CHAPTER XXI.

(Concluded.)

A few worshippers were scattered throughout the building, and Dorothy took one of the seats nearest the entrance. It was still day outside, but here through the narrow slits of stained windows only a faint twilight penetrated. In the chancel a couple of candles shone like dim stars. Dorothy wished her father had come with her, it was so peaceful here; she felt her cares drop from her as she knelt and listened to the words so familiar, yet ever coming as a new message to the weary heart. The service was nearly over when a warm gust of wind, sweeping through the open door and fluttering her mantle as it passed, slightly startled her and made her think that a storm was near at hand. A moment after a livid flash of lightning leapt through the windows, and a deafening crash of thunder made the solid little building tremble. Then, with a sound like the tramp of a great army, down came the rain upon the roof, then flash upon flash, roar upon roar, and the storm reigned supreme over the city.

The service was over, the young clergyman had retired to the vestry, and the few worshippers were gathered in the porch looking out at the deluge of rain which had converted the narrow street for the nonce into a river and streamed in miniature Niagaras from every spout and ledge of the building. They were women living in the immediately neighbourhood, and one by one, remembering home duties or frightened little ones looking for their return, they put their shawls over their heads and ran the few steps through the down-pour.

But Dorothy, anxious though she was to relieve her father's mind as to her safety, hesitated. She had two streets to traverse; and so lightly clad would be wet through before she had accomplished a third of the distance. It was rapidly growing

dark, however; the gas lamps, blurred by the rain, were brightening along the street, though every now and again paled by the stronger glare of the lightning. She had never been out alone in London after night-fall. She was standing within the shelter of the porch, but leaning forward a little, undecided whether to brave the storm or to wait till it had abated, when she heard a rapid footstep approaching. It stopped suddenly, and Dorothy shrank back into the porch as she perceived the figure of a man coming directly towards her. But the next instant, with a feeling of relief so intense that words failed her, she realized that it was Rupert Vaughan who stood at her side.

"I have just come from your father," he said, clasping the little cold hand she held out to him, "he thought you would be here, and I am supplied with cloak and umbrella to convey you home."

"How long you have been away!" she said, reproachfully. "Papa has been feeling wretched, and I have been so unhappy about him; but now you have come back it will be all right,—don't think me the most selfish creature in the world," she added.

He was wrapping her cloak about her while she spoke.

"Then you are glad that I have come back?" he said; "you really missed me a little?"

"It is your own fault," she answered; "you have made us feel that we cannot do without you."

They had traversed half the distance to Bell Street before Rupert spoke; then his words came to her distinctly amidst the rush and patter of the rain.

"And do you think it is an easy thing for me to do without you?"

It was the only time that he had ever by a word betrayed his real feeling for her, but it would have been impossible not to have understood the passionate tenderness, the reproachful sadness in his voice. It came to Dorothy with a strange shock which, for a moment, made her feel as if she had lost her hold on everything. She made no answer, but he felt her hand tremble for a moment on his arm.

"Your father wants country air," he said, presently; "we must move him out of here as soon as possible."

"We cannot afford it," she said; "I have not been able even to take him into the country for a day."

"Have you finished your copying?"

"Yes."

"And you have wanted the money?"

"We had to pay for our lodgings last week."

"Well, you need not trouble about money matters any longer."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that it was business connected with you which took me away. Your grand-uncle is dead, Dorothy, and has left a great deal of money behind him."

"Dead!"

There is a solemnity in the thought of death which always strikes home to the young, unworldly heart, and puts, for a while, all else in the back ground.

"Yes, he was a very old man—many years older than your father."

They had reached the door of the lodging house, and Rupert held out his hand.

"No, I am not coming in to-night, as I have greeted your father. Tell him that I am coming to-morrow to talk business with you both. Good-night, Dorothy."

It was not only the storm, which after a little lull recommenced with redoubled fury and continued till the small hours, which kept Dorothy awake that night.

"And do you think it is an easy matter for me to do without you?"

Rupert's voice, laden with passionate tenderness and reproach, came to her again and again, and with it the memory of all his goodness, his devotion to her father, of the great debt she owed him. She looked back through her gushy years

to the time when she had first known him. How patient, how tender, how constant in his goodness to the wayward, imperious girl he had ever been. Then, like a sudden revelation, came the memory of his changed manner, of his infrequent visits, of his sudden departure, of his farewell that summer evening by the gate, and in the darkness of the night Dorothy's cheeks were covered with a burning flush. She had been blind to it all, and she had made him suffer. Yet how had he repaid her? The news he had told her that night, the thought of a change in their fortune, sank into insignificance beside that one thought that she had made him suffer.

And on the morrow Rupert came and told them, disguising as best he could the fact of his being himself sole heir to Sir Anthony Clyffe, that for the future they would, as he had said to Dorothy, not have to "trouble themselves about money matters," that, in fact, an ample fortune had come to them; but here Mr. Rivers, displaying greater knowledge of the world than Rupert had given him credit for, asserted his conviction that Rupert was practicing a pious fraud upon them. Had it been otherwise, he said, the late Sir Anthony's lawyer would have communicated directly with themselves, and besides from his experience of Sir Anthony's character, he was convinced, absolutely convinced, that he had not relented in the resolution which he had expressed concerning Dorothy.

"Were it otherwise," said Mr. Rivers, "she would have been the heiress of Clyffe itself. No, my dear fellow, the debt we already owe you we can never repay, and are content to bear, but we are not going to despoil you of your inheritance."

And now Rupert, for the first time with his old friends, displayed an amount of indignation which was almost anger.

"You are treating me unfairly," he said, "and, if indeed you owe me anything, are making me a poor return. Dorothy, I appeal to you; do I deserve this? do I deserve that you should refuse what I would give you, not as a sacrifice on my part, but as the one way in which, with an easy conscience, I can appropriate what is still a fortune too ample for my needs."

"Papa," said Dorothy, and her voice was broken with a sob, "we must not refuse Mr. Vaughan's offer; he has been so good to us, and, as he says, it would be making him a poor return to refuse what would add to his happiness."

Rupert looked at her as she spoke; her sweet, pale face bore the traces of tears, and had never seemed to him so lovely. He went and stood beside her.

"Dorothy," he said, "there is one other way out of this difficulty—one way which, while it would not offend your father's sense of justice, would add so much more to my happiness. Does not your heart tell you what it is? Dorothy, I have loved you from the day that your father met me, a solitary man, on the fair way to be a misanthrope, and took me to your home. You were standing among your flowers—a sweet flower yourself—and from that hour to this I have loved you. Will you try to give me something in return for that?"

Dorothy looked up at last and he saw the answer in her eyes. He stooped and kissed her.

"Mr. Rivers," he said, taking her by the hand and leading her to her father, "we have circumvented poor old Sir Anthony after all."

And Dorothy, between laughing and crying, clasped her arms about her father's neck.

One word about the Boldens, father and son, and our tale is ended.

Retribution, as the world understands it, is not always meted out in this life. Yet there are a thousand ways in which men pay their penalties for the past which are unseen and unknown save to themselves. Benjamin Bolden remained, to the eyes of the world, the man he had been, but the experiences of that one night, when the death blow had been dealt to his pride in his son, had left a wound which, though scarred over, would ache while life lasted. As for Vere, he remained abroad until summoned home by his father, who,