

house. Uncle Barum had possessed nothing very fine, but the little that he had, added to what was already in the cottage, served to furnish it very nicely, even the new room had been finished for Letitia upstairs. Mercy sold a few articles, and put the ten dollars that came from them in her trunk. She thought she had a right to save that for Thomas.

But the forty dollars that had been in Uncle Barum's desk, what of that? Forty dollars is a very small sum of money generally; but to a person who has never before had forty dollars at one time, that amount looks large indeed. Mercy's forty dollars occasioned her much thought. Should she save that to help Thomas when he came from prison? Thomas had deserved very little of her; but Achilles had deserved much. For eight years of patient, persistent, unflinching toil, he had cared for her and for the children. Mercy had the element of justice fairly well developed in her gentle nature.

She handed the forty dollars to Achilles one evening. "My son, I know you want to buy some land. Here, make the first payment with this. It is yours; if it were ten times as much you would deserve it all for your goodness to me and your brother and sisters."

"Are you sure you want me to have it, mother? It is all you have."

"No; you children are all I have. This little money is yours. I am glad enough to be able to give you something for once."

"I sold Uncle Barum's horse and buggy and harness, and so on, to-day, for ninety dollars, for Samuel," said Achilles, "and I was going to have Friend Amos Lowell take it at interest until Samuel needs it; but Friend Amos said he thought I had better borrow it myself, and use it in getting the land I want, and I can pay it and the interest on it when Samuel needs it."

"I think that will be a good plan," said Mercy, and she and Achilles sat talking for some time about the land to be purchased and the improvements to be made.

But there was another subject lying even nearer to Mercy's heart, about which she did not speak to Achilles; she knew it would only irritate him. This long silence that had fallen between her and Thomas distressed her. It was nearly a year now since she had heard from him, and she had written to him and to the chaplain. She felt that she must go and try to see Thomas. Perhaps he was sick. Could it be that he was dead? Surely they would have let her know. The trip would be expensive. That ten dollars which she had put in her trunk would not cover it. She must be gone a day and two nights; she would have to get some money from Letitia, eight dollars at least. She felt that Letitia would help her and sympathize with her.

She must wait until Letitia came home from Ladbury for the summer, then she could get the money from her, and leave the house and children in her charge. It seemed such a terrible undertaking to go in the cars to a distant city. Mercy had not left the environs of Ladbury since the week that she was married. She shrank painfully from the undertaking; once or twice she thought perhaps she had better let Letitia or Samuel go. But no! poor children, they had been disgraced enough; they should not present themselves before the prison officials as a convict's children; their father should never be seen by them with shaven head and convict garb. This was her burden; she was the one who had taken Thomas Stanhope for better or worse; she must go, and go alone to seek him.

She thought of these things as she worked in the house, while through the open door and windows came the cheery song or whistle of Achilles from the fields that were now his own, and where he was already planting crops for the first time—buckwheat, and broom-corn. He planted crops for which the season was not too late. When her brooding over Thomas and that terrible visit became too torturing, Mercy went out to work among her flowers and vines in the garden, which in the eight years of the reign of Achilles had become as a bower of beauty.

Meantime Letitia had gone back to the house of Friend Amos Lowell. With her went the little blue-painted box of clothing, the box hinged and painted and provided with a padlock by Achilles, when Letitia first left home. When Letitia prepared to

leave the room which had been hers since she went to live with Uncle Barum, she took Uncle Barum's old coat down from the nail where she had hung it the night when he died, and, giving it a good brushing, folded it neatly to be placed in the bottom of her box.

"What are you going to do with that old dud?" said Sacy, who had come up to ask Letitia for the hundredth time what Uncle Barum's last words could have meant.

"Keep it for Uncle Barum's sake. He gave it to me."

"I wonder why he wouldn't get himself a better coat. It did vex Madge so to see him go about in that heavy, faded, old-fashioned rig. Summer and winter he wanted to wear that ugly coat."

"He was old, and his blood was chilly. I think old people become accustomed to some particular garments, and do not like to change them for others, even nicer or more fashionable. They are not so common-foretable in the new things. This coat reminds me of Uncle Barum; I can see just how he looked in it." And Letitia, laying the coat in the bottom of her chest, prudently sprinkled it with a little gum camphor.

"He always seemed so economical, and I can't tell where his money went," continued Mrs. Terhune. "Did you know there were only twenty-five hundred dollars in bonds? I thought there would be five or six thousand."

"Farmers don't get rich very fast," said Letitia, packing her few books, and proceeding to fold her garments to lay in the box. "Uncle Barum was only a farmer."

"But he used to lend money, and he farmed many years and was very saving. Did he ever tell you how much he had?"

"No; but he spoke of getting interest, and it was not more than the interest on twenty-five hundred, at four per cent. I do not think that he spent more than that interest and the rent that Philip paid for the farm."

"He might just as well have given the boy that farm out and out, when he went on it, instead of asking rent!"

"Then what would Uncle Barum have lived on?" said Letitia.

"He never hurt himself making presents to you," said Sacy, as she regarded critically Letitia's few plain clothes.

"He gave me constant kindness, a comfortable home, a chance to go to school. He has given mother and the children a number of presents too. He used to tell me that when I was twenty-one, he meant to give me a watch and a black silk dress. I think he meant to be liberal, but he had less money than people supposed."

Letitia went to Friend Amos Lowell's, and there the old coat lay in her chest; it was out of the way and safe from moths. Friend Sara saw it one day, as the chest stood open.

"Seems to me," said Friend Sara, "Uncle Barum might have given thee a better souvenir than that old coat. Will thee try to make it over into a coat for Samuel?"

"I think it hardly good enough," said Letitia; "it is quite threadbare in many places, and I could earn, by sewing, a new coat for Samuel, in the time it would take to rip, turn, and cut over this great-coat. I don't suppose he meant it for a souvenir; he had a kind of affection for the coat from long use, and he did not want Mrs. Terhune and Madge to throw it in the rag bag. He knew I would take care of it, for his sake."

"It is worth nothing but to braid into mats," said Friend Sara, "and thee would not feel like doing that. The old man was like a parent to thee."

"When I go home I shall hang it up in the closet in my room."

"Be sure then that thee hangs it in a cotton bag, tied tight, else the moths may get into it and spread through the house. The bequest would serve thee but a poor turn, if it filled thy house with moths."

However, the coat served Letitia better than that. There was a sudden cold night when she woke up chilly, and realized that she had been premature in laying away Friend Sara's warm quilts. She was glad enough to get Uncle Barum's great-coat from the box, and spread it over her counterpane.

Then one Sunday evening Philip walked home with her from church, and came in to sit for a while, and a rain set in. Philip must go back to the farm, five miles off,

and he had with him no overcoat; he wore only his new spring suit.

"I can lend you Uncle Barum's great-coat," said Letitia. "I'm sure he would have been glad to know it could be of use to you. It will keep you perfectly dry. Be sure and let me have it back safe."

"Oh, I'll bring it myself," said Philip.

"Where did you get that hideous old coat? I thought I had seen the last of it," said Madge to her brother, as on Thursday evening he stopped at his mother's home, the old coat on his arm.

"Letitia lent it to me when it was raining, Sunday night."

"Great loan that; I would not have the old thing on."

"It may have saved me pneumonia, and I know it saved my spring suit," laughed Philip.

"I suppose you're going to take it back," said his mother. "Are you never going to stop visiting Letitia Stanhope?"

"Yes," replied Philip fervently, "when I can get Letitia to come and live at the Titus farm."

"There are plenty of as nice girls, with more money."

"None as nice to my mind as Letitia, and as for money, a girl like Letitia is a fortune in herself."

"Well, it hurts me to think of my son having a convict for a father-in-law," said Sacy.

"It is a little rough on us, mamsey; on Letitia, most of all, but now it is done it can't be helped. After all we are not to blame for our parents, or responsible for them, but for our children. You could not be praised or blamed on your father's account, mamsey; but if you had brought me up a scamp, then I should be a disgrace to you. Let us forget how bad Thomas Stanhope was, and only think how nice Letitia is."

"I only hope you won't regret your choice," said Sacy, sighing.

"Oh," said Philip with fervour, "if I can get my choice, I shall be the happiest fellow in the world!" He went off with the old coat on his arm. Madge felt indignant.

"See him carrying that horrid old coat as comportedly as if it was a brand new fur-trimmed beaver! And if Letitia would go out and take a walk with him, which she won't, he would be as proud of her as if she were a princess."

"Why not?" said her father, "I doubt if there is any princess who is a better, sweeter girl in her own right than Letitia."

"Well, I suppose we must have the privilege of seeing Phil go over to Friend Amos Lowell's to visit her, all next year," said Madge, much aggrieved.

"No, you will not; he will do his visiting up on the mountain. I hear the teacher on the mountain has resigned her school; she has had it ten years. She is going to be married. Letitia told me this noon that she had applied for that school, so that she could be with her mother. Besides she thought that if Samuel stayed here at Friend Amos Lowell's, that would be enough. I saw one of the school committee this evening, and he said they were glad, indeed, to get Letitia up there."

"She'll have a dull time of it," said Madge, "teaching that mountain school for thirty dollars a month, and living way up there out of reach of any society or amusement."

The fate thus sketched by Madge, did not look doleful to Letitia—joyful, rather. How happy she would be living with her mother once more, and cheering her and comforting her! It made her glad to think how Mercy's face always lit up when turned toward her. And there was Achilles, the faithful brother, the hard worker, who never thought of going out in the evening; how glad he would be to have Letitia talk to, and discuss with him the affairs of the farm and the news in the paper.

When Letitia returned home Mercy explained to her that plan of going to the penitentiary, to see what had become of her husband.

"Poor little mother, it will be a terrible undertaking for you," said Letitia; but as she saw her mother could not be easy in this uncertainty, she agreed to provide the needed money, and to talk over the project with Achilles. "Achilles need not know that you have gone there, unless you choose," said Letitia.

"I had rather have him know. Achilles deserves frank and fair treatment; there

never was a better son, and he might as well know now, as any time, that I cannot give your father up and turn my back on him, when all the world forsakes him. I shall try to help and comfort him."

Letitia did not reply; she wondered if it were possible that her father could ever show himself worthy of such faithful devotion.

Mercy's visit to the penitentiary was, however, indefinitely put off. Patience began to be sick a few days after the home-coming of Letitia and Samuel. She became very ill and the doctor pronounced the disease scarlet fever. Mercy could not leave the child, and was not willing that Letitia should incur the risk run in nursing her. "It is not God's will that I should go to look after your father at present," she said. "My first duty is here among you children. I must take care of Patience myself, and after she gets well, I should not dare to go away for some weeks, lest some of the rest of you should come down with the same disease. No, I must let all that plan go; the Lord will lead the way; all we have to do is to follow."

The Stanhope family were in a fashion of quarantine; they did not need the help of their neighbours, and every one feared the fever. Philip Terhune came regularly to visit them, but Mercy and Letitia would not allow him to enter the gate. He sat on the horse block planted for Friend Amos, and Letitia sat in a swing that had been put up for Patty, and thus for half an hour or so they chatted, and then Philip rode away.

One night Patience was very ill; certain new symptoms had appeared, and it was decided that Achilles should go down to Ladbury, to speak with the doctor, and bring up whatever medicine was ordered. A heavy thunder-storm was raging. Letitia wrote out the message to the doctor, lest Achilles might forget something.

"You need your overcoat, Achilles, let me get it," she said.

"I have none. I had outgrown mine so that I could not button it, and as it was pretty good, I sold it to Tim Jedd this spring."

"I'll get Uncle Barum's old coat for you; that will keep you dry as a nut," said Letitia, going for it.

Before Achilles had been gone long, the storm ceased, and the summer night became exceedingly hot and close. When Achilles returned, as his sister met him, he said:

"I have two things to tell you that you will be sorry to hear. I have lost Uncle Barum's old coat, and—father has been pardoned out from prison."

(To be continued.)

ONE WAY.

A YOUNG man in company with several other gentlemen, called upon a young lady. Her father was also present to assist in entertaining the guests. He did not share his daughter's scruples against the use of spirituous drinks; for he had wine to offer. This was poured out and would have been drunk; but the young lady asked, "Did you call upon me or upon papa?"

Gallantry, if nothing else, compelled them to answer. "We called on you."

"Then you will please not drink wine. I have lemonade for my visitors."

The father urged the guests to drink, and they were undecided.

The young lady added, "Remember, if you called on me, then you drink lemonade; but if upon papa, why, in that case I have nothing to say."

The wine glasses were set down, with their contents untasted. After leaving the house one of the party exclaimed, "That was the most effectual temperance lecture I have ever heard." The young man from whom these facts were obtained broke off at once from the use of strong drink, and holds a grateful remembrance of the lady who gracefully and resolutely gave him to understand that her guests should not drink wine.

Good and evil are two distinctively different roads. Moderate drinking is an attractive little by-path that leads from the former to the latter almost before you are aware of it. It is a short cut that has cut short many a promising career.