

## DARKENED

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

High in the windy light-house tower  
The lamps are burning free,  
Each sending with good-will and power  
Its message o'er the sea,  
Where ships are sailing out of sight,  
Hidden in storm and cloud and night.

On the white waves that seethe and dash,  
A ruddy gleam is shed;  
Above, the lighted windows flash  
Alternate gold and red.  
Save where one sad and blinded glass  
Forbids the happy light to pass.

The hungry sea entreats the light,  
The struggling light is faint,  
But obdurate and blank as night  
Rises the darkened pane,  
Casting a shadow long and black  
Along the weltering ocean track.

Ah, who shall say what drowning eyes  
Yearn for that absent ray;  
What unseen fleets and argosies,  
Plowing the doubtful way,  
Seek through the night and grope and strain  
For guidance from that darkened pane?

Ah, Light Divine, so full, so free!  
Ah, world that lies in night!  
Ah, guiding radiance, shine through me  
Brightly and still more bright,  
Nor ever be thy rays in vain  
Because I am a "darkened pane."

## THE DEACON'S DAUGHTER.

BY JOY ALLISON.

(Continued.)

The momentous day arrived; a clear, cool October day, which was to end in an evening glorious with the harvest moon. Margaret walked down to the post-office, as usual, and called at Grandmother Pond's.

"Don't you want me to come and stay to-night, Grandmother? There is to be a concert, and father doesn't want to go; but I do, and I couldn't go home alone, you know."

"Why, yes, Margaret. You know I'm always glad to have you here. I'm the more glad to-night, because Mira Ann is going home to stay with her sick mother."

"I'll come, then," said Margaret, and hugged herself for joy that all things seemed to favour her so.

Of course, no objection was made at home to her plan of returning to spend the night, since Grandmother Pond would otherwise be left alone. So the twilight saw Margaret tripping along between the willow hedges toward the village, and the full moon, sailing through a clear sky, at eight o'clock saw her following a crowd of people up the stairs, into the hall where the concert was to be. The singing was good. The concert differed very little from others that she had attended. She would have been glad to be there if the gift business had not been connected with it, and willing to have paid the usual price, fifty cents. The other half dollar was for the lottery; only Margaret did not think of it much by that name. But when the singing was over and the "Wheel of Fate" was brought out and exhibited to the audience, with many explanations and much parade of fair dealing, the excitement deepened. When it was set in motion, Margaret's heart beat high. She watched and listened, and her burning cheeks and dilated eyes testified to her intense interest in the result. The piano! The piano! She had ears and eyes for that only.

"Number nine hundred and seventy-eight wins the piano! Will the fortunate owner of this ticket please step forward?"

A white-haired gentleman rose, bland and smiling, in answer to this call and made his way toward the platform.

It was all over for Margaret. She

neither heard nor cared what was done afterward. Somehow she had almost expected to win that piano, and for a few moments the disappointment was very keen. Then her eyes, no longer blinded by a vain delusive hope, began to see more clearly. She looked at the people around her. How very eager and excited they were! Her own face still on fire with the same passion. It was gambling? No more nor less. A loathing seized her, a horror of the whole vile thing. Then a panic, lest she should be seen and recognized there. Deacon Pickering's daughter! She suddenly covered her face with her veil and rose to go home. It was not easy to get through the crowded aisles. Gift concerts were a new thing and had hardly found their level in the minds of the people yet, and great numbers were drawn into them.

When she was safe in the cosy little room where she was to sleep, she threw aside her hat and shawl, let down her long, thick hair, and ran her fingers through it, to cool her heated brain. She dipped a towel in cold water and applied it to her burning cheeks.

"I'm glad and thankful I didn't win it," said she. "How could I ever have taken any comfort with it? Nancy was right, only she needn't have been so cross about it. I don't want anything that's got by gambling, and now I'm done with all such things. I shall never wish to try again, I'm sure."

Sleep was long in coming that night; but at last the fever of excitement passed away, and it came, sound and dreamless as the sleep of healthy, happy youth should be.

A few days, and Margaret only remembered her late experience to feel disgust with the whole affair—the loss of her long-preserved pocket piece, the deception of her father and grandmother, and the disgrace of being mixed up in a lottery. It was not pleasantly recalled by the account of the concert in *The Village Chronicle* of that week. Yet she looked with some curiosity to see who had won the prizes.

"First Prize: A Cottage House and Lot. Winning number, three hundred and forty-one. No one has yet claimed this prize. The managers affirm that the tickets were all sold. The lucky individual will, doubtless, learn of his good fortune soon and come forward to claim it."

Margaret read no further. That was her ticket. She had no need to get her purse to make sure. She, Margaret Pickering, daughter of Deacon Pickering, a man of unspotted reputation, had won a house in a lottery! Her heart beat fast and hard.

"What will Father think? What will he say to me?" she said, over and over. She heard Nancy's step in the next room, and, not wishing to see her now, she hastily took herself and her emotions up stairs to her own little chamber, till she should have time to think over the situation.

"What shall I do with it? I shall never dare to claim it. I could never bear to have it. It would be a disgrace to us all. I must tell Father. It's too heavy a secret for me to carry alone. I'll go and tell him, right away."

So saying, Margaret ran softly down the back stairs, out through the orchard, and down to the mill. She found her father alone, standing by the hopper, watching the corn he had just poured in, as it slowly sank down out of sight between the great stones that crushed it. She came and stood by him.

"Well, Daughter?" said he, inquiringly, as he noticed her flushed face and troubled eyes.

"I wanted to talk with you, Father."

He went into the back room and brought a chair for her, placing it beside him near the hopper.

"I hope nobody will come. I want to tell you something," she said, looking

apprehensively at the door and not seeming quite ready to begin.

"I hardly think anybody'll come, dearie," said the Deacon, gently. "Still, we'll go into the back room, if you say so."

"No, no. It's just as well to stay here, I dare say," said she, with a little nervous laugh.

"Well, Daughter?" said her father again, all ready for the communication.

It was a little hard to begin, sitting there, looking into that good, true, honest face.

"I shall shame you to death, Father! I don't know what you'll say to me."

"Well, you've prepared me! Say on," said the Deacon. "I guess I can stand it to hear anything my little girl could stand it to do."

His confidence in her did not make it easier to tell her story; but there was nothing to be gained by delay, so she plunged into it at once. When all was told, her father was silent for a little while.

"Well, dearie, I s'pose you don't know so much about lotteries and gambling as I do, or you wouldn't have touched the dirty business with one of your little fingers. If I'd told you before something that I am going to tell you now, maybe 'twould have saved you this."

He stopped to fill up the hopper and then told her the story of her sister's early sorrow.

"When Nancy was your age she was the prettiest girl in the neighbourhood, not to say the village. She had a lovely complexion (clear pink and white,) and it was always changing. She blushed so easy, it took almost nothing to bring the colour into her cheeks, and she had the brightest blue eyes. You'd never imagine from seeing her now, what she was then."

"As a matter of course, she had some lovers; but Nancy was always a good girl. She didn't fool any of them. She just picked out the one that suited her, and sent the rest about their business, as a good girl ought."

"Henry Lane (he was the one she liked) didn't suit me hardly so well; but that's neither here nor there. She loved him and he loved her, and they both saved up their money and were going to be married in the Spring and go out West."

"I wasn't so well pleased with that, either, as I should have been to have them stay near by; where I could still look after my girl a bit; but I was just married to your mother, and the West is a great country, and I know there's chances there that can't be had here, and I'd no call to speak against it."

"I did insist that he should go first and get a home ready for Nancy. Perhaps I was wrong there. If she'd gone along with him, it might never have happened. And then again it might. We don't know much about things. Only we do know the Lord reigns, and that's comfort always."

"Well, he hadn't been gone a week when my poor girl got a letter, saying a young man had shot himself in Cincinnati, and the only name they could find about him was on a letter from her, and did she know who he was. They described him and his clothes, so we hadn't much doubt that it was Henry."

"We got ready and went right off to Cincinnati; and we found it was just as we had feared. Henry had fallen in with a fellow who got him into a gambling-house—hells, I believe they call them, and it's a true name enough. At first they let him win—quite a large sum of money—till he got excited and tried for more. He thought luck favoured him, poor fellow. It was only the baiting of the trap, and the luck soon turned. He lost every cent of his own and my poor girl's money, and then, in shame and despair, took his own life."

"And I thought we should lose Nancy for a good while. A brain fever brought her to the borders of the grave, and, after she got over that, it seemed as if it was only to go into a decline."

"But when you was born, and left a little, helpless, motherless creatur', it seemed as if she was turned back from the grave to take care of you. Peared as if there was healing to her poor, broken heart in your little clinging fingers, and gradually she got back her health; but she never got back her good looks nor her happy ways. She took faithful care of you, just as faithful as any mother; and she loves you just as much as any mother could, only, you see, she's always been so afraid of spoiling you that she didn't show it much."

"You must love her, and be gentle to her, when she don't seem so chipper and lively as you incline to be, for she's seen trouble such as I hope it'll never be your lot to see."

"I didn't know. I'm so sorry I didn't know," said Margaret, in a faltering voice, "what it was that made her so sober and gloomy. I don't wonder now, and I'll try to make her happier. I can please her, if I try, and I will try. I shall understand her better in future."

"Well, about this business, now: I don't see as we can do any better than to burn up the ticket and say nothing at all about it. We couldn't own a house—my little daughter couldn't nor I couldn't—that came to us so. That's certain sure. It would be an eyesore and a disgrace to us and to the cause. I suppose if we don't claim it, they'll go and put it up again, and so there'll be more of the bad business, but I don't know as we can help it; and maybe under the circumstances, the Lord'll forgive us and not lay that sin to our charge. Where is the lottery ticket, dearie?"

Margaret produced it, and her father took it into the back room, where was an open fireplace. He lighted a match.

"Perhaps you'd better do it yourself, Daughter," said he, putting the match and ticket into her hands.

With trembling fingers, the girl held the concert ticket in the blaze till it was well on fire, and then laid it down on the hearth, where they watched the last shred burn and shrivel up in the flame.

"It's gone, Father!" said she, throwing her arms around his neck. "And you forgive me?"

"Certain, dearie, certain! We're all poor, failable creatur's. May the Lord forgive you as freely as I do."

"I'll go home, now, and help Nancy. I rather guess she's needing me. At any rate, I want to help her," said Margaret, her black eyes flashing through tears.

"Yes, go, dearie. Comfort her all you can. You'll have a better story to tell next time you come down to the mill to see me, maybe."

"I'll try, Father. Good bye!"

"Good-bye, Margie—Daughter. Good-bye till evening."—*N. Y. Independent.*

—The American Missionary Association, has had another very prosperous year, receiving 30 per cent. more in funds for its work than in the previous year.

—The "Chinese Recorder" reports an interesting state of affairs at Ningpo, where the native Christian converts connected with the Presbyterian Mission have established an academy. It is a purely native affair, controlled and supported by them. Native gentlemen, not Christians, have contributed, and the converts who were poor gave materials and labour, and the farmers gave cotton, and the women spun and wove the necessary articles for furnishing the buildings. All this is done in hearty co-operation with the mission, and gives every promise of great success.