

The Daughter's Turn.

BY MARY F. BUTTS.

Lay the book down, Isabel, before the story's done;
Leave your picture, Marion, though the piece be just begun;
Come from dreamland, Miriam, however sweet the dream,
Wash the dishes, bake the bread, sow the waiting seam.
School is over; hasten another task to learn—
Mother's worn and weary; it is now the daughter's turn.

Watch lest you be wanting in what her heart most needs—
Earnest, thoughtful service, gentle, loving deeds.
As her footsteps falter, O may she never miss
A daughter's strength to lean on, a daughter's tender kiss.
A lifetime is not long enough your filial debt to learn—
Mother's worn and weary; it is now the daughter's turn.

"Probable Sons."

CHAPTER V.
A PRODIGAL.

"Uncle Edward, nurse and I are going shopping; would you like us to buy you anything? We are going in the dog-cart with Harris."

Milly was dancing up and down on the rug inside the front door as she spoke. It was a bright, frosty morning, and Sir Edward was leaving the breakfast-room with the newspaper and a large packet of letters in his hand. He stopped and glanced at the little fur-clad figure as she stood there, eager anticipation written on her face, and his thoughts went back to the time when he as a boy looked upon a day's visit to the neighbouring town—nine miles away—as one of his greatest pleasures.

"Yes," he said, slowly fumbling in his waistcoat pocket; "you can get me some pens and blotting-paper at the stationer's. I will write down the kind I want, and here is the money. Keep the change, and buy anything you like with it."

He handed her half a sovereign, and Milly's cheeks flushed with delight as she took it.

"I've never had a gold piece of money before. What a lot it will buy!" she said. "Thank you very much indeed. I was wanting to buy something my own self, and I've only a threepenny bit cook gave me, but now I shall be quite rich."

It was late in the afternoon when nurse and her little charge drove back, and Sir Edward met them coming up the avenue. Milly's face was clouded, and there were traces of tears on her cheeks, and this was such an unusual sight that Sir Edward inquired of the nurse what was the matter.

"She has not been good, sir, I am sorry to say. It isn't often that I have to pull her up, but she has given me such a fright and trouble this afternoon as I am not likely to forget in a hurry."

"What has she been doing? But never mind; I will not detain you now. I can hear about it when we get in."

Nurse was evidently very disturbed in mind, for she peered into Sir Edward's car, directly they were inside the hall, a confused story:

"I was in the grocer's, sir, and I knew I should be there some time; for cook, she gave me so many commissions I had to write a long list of them. I said to Miss Milly, 'You can stand outside, but don't go a step farther.' She knows she is never allowed to speak to such people; I've known, as I told her, children being carried bodily off and set down at a street corner with hardly a rag on their backs; and to think of her marching off with him, and never a thought of my anxiety—and the way I went rushing up and down the streets—and the policemen—they are perfectly useless to help a person, but can only stare at you and grin. I'm sure I never expected to light eyes on her again, and I lost my purse and my best umbrella; I left them both somewhere, but it was nigh on two hours I spent, and my shopping not near done, and he the greatest-looking rascal one might see coming out of gaol. I'm sure I shouldn't have been so angry but to see her smiling face, as if she hadn't done any wrong at all, nor disobeyed me flatly, and most likely put herself in the way of catching the most infectious disease from the very look of him, and run the risk of being robbed and perhaps murdered, and not an idea in her head that she was a very naughty child, but quite expected me to see the reasonableness of it all!"

Nurse stopped for breath, whilst Milly's hanging head, heaving chest, and quick sobs showed that by this time nurse's words had quite convinced her of her wrong-doing.

Sir Edward was surprised at the interest he felt in his little niece's trouble.

"I am afraid I cannot understand your story, nurse," he said quietly, "but I daresay Miss Millicent will tell me herself. Come into the study, child, with me."

He took her hand in his, and led her away, whilst nurse looked after him in astonishment, and Ford, the old butler, standing by, said with great solemnity,—

"You may well stare, nurse. Mark my words, that child will be able to twist him round with her little finger one of these days. I see it a-developin'; it will be a terrible come-down to the master—but there, I will say that the women always conquer, and they begin it when they're in short frocks."

"I don't see the remarkableness in a gentleman taking notice of his own sister's child," returned nurse testily; "the wonder is that he should hold her at arm's length as he does, and treat her as if she were a dog or a piece of furniture, without any feelings, and she his own flesh and blood, too. There's no 'coming down' to have a spark of humanity in his breast occasionally."

And nurse sailed upstairs, the loss of her purse and umbrella having considerably ruffled her usually even temper.

Sir Edward seated himself by the study fire, and Milly stood before him, one little hand resting upon his knee and the

other holding her tiny handkerchief to her eyes, and vainly trying to restrain her sobs.

"Now, suppose you stop crying, and tell me what has happened!" her uncle said, feeling moved at seeing his usually self-contained little niece in such grief. Milly applied her handkerchief vigorously to her eyes, and looking up with quivering lips, she said,—

"I didn't mean to be naughty, uncle. Nurse hasn't been angry with me like she is now for years, and I'm so unhappy!"

The pitiful tone and look touched Sir Edward's heart, and, on the impulse of the moment, he did what he had never as yet attempted; lifted her upon his knee, and told her to proceed with her story; and Milly, after a final struggle with her tears, got the better of them, and was able to give him a pretty clear account of what had happened.

"I had bought your pens and blotting-paper, uncle, and was going to a picture-shop to spend the rest of my money when nurse had finished at the grocer's. I was standing outside, when I saw a man coming along. He limped, and his hat was broken in, and he was so ragged that I thought he must be a probable son, and then I thought he might be Tommy going home, and when I thought that, I couldn't think of anything else, and I forgot all about nurse, and I forgot she told me to stay there, and I ran after

him as hard as I could. I caught him up, and he looked very astonished when I asked him was his name Tommy. He said, 'No,' and he laughed at me, and then I asked him was he a probable son, because he looked like one. He said he didn't know what kind of a person that was. And then I had to explain it to him. He told me he had never had a home to run away from, so that wouldn't do; but he really looked just like the man I've seen in Mr. Maxwell's picture, and I told him so, and then I found out what he was, and I was so sorry, and yet I was so glad."

Milly paused, and her large, expressive eyes shone as she turned them up to her uncle's face, and her voice dropped almost to a whisper as she said,—

"I found out he was one of God's probable sons. When I asked him if he had run away from God, he said yes, he supposed he had done that, so of course he was ragged and unhappy."

"That is not always the case," put in Sir Edward, half touched, half amused. "Sometimes it is very rich people who run away from God, and they get richer when they are away from him."

"But they can't be happy, uncle. Oh, they never can be!"

"Perhaps not."

"Well, I talked to this poor man till we had walked quite away from the shops, and then he turned down a lane, and I went with him; and we were both rather tired, so we sat down together on some doorsteps inside an archway, and he told me all about himself. His name is Jack, and his father and mother are

dead, like mine; and he got drunk one night, and fell down and broke his arm, and then he went to a hospital; and when he got well and went back to his work again, his master couldn't take him, because some one else was in his place, and he couldn't get any work. I asked him were there no pigs to keep, but he said there weren't any in London, and he was there, and for six months, he told me, he had been 'on the tramp'; that's what he called it. I asked him what that meant, and he said just walking on every day to no place particular. And he said something about going to the bad, which I couldn't quite understand. Then I asked him why he didn't go back to God, and he said he had been a good boy once, when he went to Sunday-school, and he had a very good uncle who kept a baker's shop in London, and who wanted him to go and live with him, but he wouldn't, because he was too good for him. And I asked him why he wouldn't go to him now, and he said he couldn't tramp back again to London, it was too far, and he had no money. So then I opened my purse, and we counted over my money together, and he said it was seven shillings and a sixpence, and it would be just enough to take him back, if I would lend it to him. So of course I did, and he asked me my name and where I lived, and I told him."

"The scoundrel!" muttered Sir Edward.

Milly paused. "Why are you looking so angry, uncle? I was so glad to give him the money; and then we talked a good deal, and I begged him not to be one of God's probable sons any more. Fancy! He wouldn't believe God loved him, and he wouldn't believe that God wanted him back! I told him I should be quite frightened to get away from God, and he—well, he almost didn't seem to care, he said no one cared what came of him, whether he was hung dead, or not; and I told him no one cared for me much except nurse, but God did. I feel he loves me, and I know he loves Jack just the same; doesn't he, uncle?"

"And when did nurse find you?" inquired Sir Edward, evading this question.

Milly's little face, which had been gradually brightening with the interest of her story, now clouded over again, and she hung her head.

"She was fearful angry with me; she was quite hot and red, and she snatched me away, and said that Jack was a thief and—a vagabond, or something like that. She scolded me all the way home, and I don't think she will ever love me again. She said it was just a chance she found me, and if she hadn't come along that lane I should have been lost forever! And she was angry most of all because I shook hands with Jack and wished him good-bye. I don't think nurse would run and meet a probable son if she had one; she thinks all ragged people are wicked. But I'm—I'm dreadful sorry I was disobedient. Do you think I have been very naughty, Uncle Edward?"

Sir Edward twisted the ends of his moustache slowly. "I think you were naughty to run after a strange man like that, and I quite understand nurse's displeasure. You made her exceedingly anxious."

"And is God very angry with me?"

"God is not pleased with disobedient children."

"May I kneel down and ask him to forgive me now?"

Sir Edward hesitated. "I think you had better go to the nursery and do it there."

"I don't want to see nurse till I have done it. May I? Will you ask God to forgive me too?"

"Your prayer will be quite sufficient." Milly slipped off his knee, and then, kneeling down with folded hands and closed eyes, she said softly,—

"Please God, will you forgive me? I'm so sorry I disobeyed nurse and ran away. And please take care of Jack, and bring him back to you, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."



MILLY GOING SHOPPING FOR HER UNCLE.

"Now run along to nurse, and don't cry any more," said Sir Edward, as he rose from his seat.

Milly looked back wistfully as she reached the door.

"Do you think nurse is still angry?"

"Tell nurse from me that she need not scold you any more; the loss of your money ought to be a lesson to you."

"But I didn't lose it, uncle; I lent it to Jack; he wouldn't let me give it to him; he said he would send it back to me in a letter."

Sir Edward laughed unbelievably, and Milly trotted upstairs to be received with open arms by nurse at the nursery door.

"There! never mind, my dear. I have been very angry with you, but you'll never do such a thing again. Come and have your tea. I've had a cup already, and feel wonderful better. Now, don't cry any more; bless your little heart, I can't bear to see you in tears."

With that nurse took her up in her arms; and poor, tired little Milly whispered as she clung to her,—

"I was afraid you would never love me again. I've told God I'm sorry; do you quite forgive me?"

"Quite, my lamb," was the reply; "and as to loving you, I shouldn't give over doing that if you were twice as troublesome."

(To be continued.)

NOT A GOOD PLACE FOR DOCTORS.

The Westminster Gazette tells a good story in connection with the late Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson's advocacy of temperance:

He had been on a visit to one of the three or four small towns in England which have no public-house. Although there were 4,000 people there, the doctor was nearly starving. One day a young medical man came to Sir Benjamin for advice as to going to the place to practice. Sir Benjamin, placing his hands on the young doctor's shoulders, said:

"Take my advice, and don't. Those teetotalers not only have no accidents, but when wounded, heal so fast that there is neither pleasure nor profit after the first dressing."