

"Yes," said Hepzibah, her withered face suffused with vivid crimson, "looks as if we might have a shower later on."

"The Sabbath day's the Lord's day," observed Mr. Jenkins, "and he'll give us such weather as seems good to Him."

"That's every word true," assented Hepzibah, painfully aware that the minister's eyes, at first cast heavenward, were fastened upon a reit in her Sunday gown, caused by her unpremeditated descent from the fence.

The Lord preserves the elder's widow wonderfully, began Mr. Jenkins.

"Yes, He do, there's no denyin' it."

"She's had a sore trial sent her these latter days."

"I don't know as she's had any trial, exceptin' the loss of her health and the fallin' asleep in Christ of the elder," said Hepzibah, bridling. Trials were not the sort of things that redounded to the glory of the Johnson household.

"I mean in the advent of that Popish girl."

"Oh," said Hepzibah, casting about for a suitable reply. Then, with studied indifference.

"Carmelita, she's out just now. Squire Rutherford's son, he come to walk to meetin' with her this morn."

It was the knowledge of this very circumstance that had added so much asperity to the minister's tone.

"To which meeting?" he asked.

"Well, not to the Baptist, exactly," said Hepzibah, gaining time.

"No, not to the Baptist," replied Mr. Jenkins, with energy.

"Well, Mr. Rutherford, folks says he favors the Episcopalians, as most rich men does, and——"

This was a sly bit of malice, as the minister well knew. It had been a sore thorn in his flesh that the Rutherfords had favored the Episcopalians.

"Deceit has come into this once honorable house with the stranger and the

Papist," said Mr. Jenkins, in a declamatory tone. "You would conceal the truth, Hepzibah Grimes, but it is known to the town that this girl is a Papist and has even now gone to worship at the Mass house."

"Well, Squire Rutherford's son he come to take her there," said Hepzibah, defiantly.

"Now woe te you," said the minister, shaking a solemn finger at the house, "if you bring thither instruments for the perversion of the people. If, instead of being, as once you were, the abode of godliness, you become a stone of offence and a rock of scandal."

Nothing but Hepzibah's respect for the divine, under whose pulpit she sat on Sunday evenings, prevented a violent outburst, when she heard the house which she revered, as though it were a living object, thus denounced.

"Pears to me, Mr. Jenkins," she began, but whether from prudential reasons, or because time was really pressing, the minister with scant courtesy and brief farewell, took his way down the road towards the meeting-house. He had to encounter a succession of excited groups, all busy with the event of the morning. But poor Hepzibah's exultation was considerably dampened by the minister's denunciations, and she passed slowly and heavily indoors. No fire blazed upon the hearth, the cold dinner lay ready to hand in the pantry, and Hepzibah had not even the solace of work. She had to sit all day Sunday idle in a rocking-chair, once she had read her chapter of the Bible and finished morning prayers. She held to going to meeting in the evening, but that was a long way off.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The desires of regular observance are so many precious stones with which you can decorate our Lady's crown: and, on the contrary, not to value this observance is to take away the jewels and pearls that adorn her brow.—St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi.