

TOTTIE'S FIRST LETTER.

Sitting at the table there,  
Tracing every word with care,  
Little Tottie's writing;  
Pressing close her rosy lips,  
As her pen in ink she dips,  
Loving words inditing.

To mamma, as is most right,  
Her first letter she will write,  
Every effort making  
To thank her, in a loving way,  
For all the care that every day  
She of her is taking.

THE OLD NURSE.

STORY FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS.

CHAPTER VII.

Ann and Henry hastened to Avonhurst as soon as they were aware of Mrs. Forrester's danger, nor did they leave her again, but tended her with the most affectionate anxiety, and when the last duties were performed, took Alice home with them to Misley.

She remained with them some time, but at last nerved herself to the task of returning to Avonhurst—now become her own property; and where she felt it her duty to reside. She did not, however, return alone. Ann and Henry had now a large family of children growing up around them, and yielded to Alice's urgent entreaties to commit their twin daughters, Helen and Maria, to her care, on the promise that three months of every year should be spent together, alternately at Avonhurst and at Misley.

The children grew up very different, both in mind and person; and Alice loved to trace in Helen her own sister Ann's meekness and patient perseverance, while she strove diligently to counteract in the dark-eyed Maria that reckless exuberance of spirits, and heedlessness of anything but the impulse of the moment, which she had such hard struggles with herself.

The clergyman who had succeeded Mr. Hayter, was a rather infirm man; and, under his direction, Alice found full employment, for both mind and body, in the village. Her garden, too, was a never-failing source of delight; the old familiar flowers she had loved as a child, seemed quite like friends to her now; and with her little playmates by her side, she passed many a happy hour in tending her plants. Ever since the fatal night on which Nurse Amy died, the smell of honeysuckle flowers brought that agonising moment so vividly to Alice's recollection, as to make her gasp for breath and almost faint, when by any accident they were brought close to her. She did her utmost to conquer the feeling, but in vain, and it remained to her dying day a memento of the weaknesses of her youth, and almost the only one which she did not entirely succeed in subduing.

Alice had several proposals of marriage, but there was not one of the suitors for her hand, whom she felt she could, before God's altar, promise to love, honour, and obey; so she declined them all, and lived on quietly at Avonhurst, relieving the needy, teaching the ignorant, tending the sick, happy in the exercise of her benevolence, and happier still in the recollection of her REDEEMER'S words, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me!"

Both Helen and Maria recompensed Alice's devotion to them with the warmest affection, and willingly and implicitly obeyed her gentle rule. While striving to correct their faults, and to teach them in the days of their youth to seek perpetually His help, by whose grace alone they could hope to have their sinful hearts changed and a "right spirit renewed within them," Alice was ever mild and gentle. The only thing that seemed to make her angry was the least approach to procrastination,—the least least wilful delaying of duty. To that she immediately awarded a strict punishment; and when the twins had at-

tained their fourteenth year, and had already their own distinctly appointed duties amongst the sick and the poor, and Alice one day discovered that Maria had omitted her weekly reading to an old blind woman, for the sake of some amusement of her own,—she first forbid her ever attending her again, (giving the charge of her to Helen instead,) and then, taking both girls with her to the churchyard, and sitting down on the lower step of the old stone cross at the foot of which was Nurse Amy's grave, related to them the story I have just told you.

No further lesson was needed. And now, my young friends, my tale is ended. We have followed Alice through the most stormy period of her life; and have seen how, as year by year the personal charms of her youth departed from her, she was enabled by God's grace gradually to calm down every excited feeling and rebellious disposition, and being "purified in the furnace of affliction," was day by day being better prepared for that rest "that remaineth to the people of God."

Whether it pleased that God, in His wisdom, to prolong her pilgrimage on earth till those days which the wise King Solomon called "the evil days," "when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and the grasshoppers shall be a burden;" or whether in His mercy He took her home to Himself soon after the period when our story ceases, we need not inquire nor wish to know.

It is sufficient for us if we can derive a salutary lesson from her early history, nor let the remembrance of her trials depart from our minds, "as a tale that

is told," or as "the early dew that passeth away." Let no one think they have not the opportunity of doing good to others, let their own station be what it will. "The poor ye have always with you," are the words of Him who cannot err, and like all His other words, they are written for our example. The moral of this little tale may be simply embodied in the old and homely adage,

"What must be done get done to-day,  
And do not till to-morrow stay;  
There's always danger in delay!"

May it please God so to imprint this truth on the minds of all who may read these pages, as well on that of her who has written them, that "both our hearts being set to obey His commandments, and also that by Him we being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Saviour!"

AMEN!

SCENE ON A WINTER NIGHT.

The snow is over all the earth,  
But here within, the fire burns bright,  
And we are sitting round the hearth,  
So snug this winter night.

The firelight casts a ruddy glare,  
Where granny in the corner sits,  
And tells us from her elbow-chair  
Old stories as she knits.

And father mends the garden net,  
Against the pleasant summer days;  
While at his feet old Rover set,  
Is backing in the blaze.



TOTTIE'S FIRST LESSON.

At mother's side my stool I've put,  
As hard her needlework she plies,  
Still rocking with her idle foot  
The cot where baby lies.

And brother with his fingers long  
Makes figures on the whitened wall;  
And sister sings her sweetest song,  
How happy are we all!

Perhaps, while we are here at rest,  
There's some one's struggling through  
The snow,  
Upon whose scanty-covered breast  
The bitter wind doth blow.

Perhaps, while in our glowing grate,  
The cheerful blaze is rising higher,  
There's some one sitting desolate  
Without a spark of fire.

Ah, what are we, that God has blest,  
Our winter hours, and made them  
Glad?

While other hearts are sore distressed,  
While other homes are sad,

We thank Him for this genial glow,  
We thank Him for this pleasant  
Light;

May He have mercy on their woe,  
Who feel the cold to-night!

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DEATHS.

BOVELL.—On the 16th January last, at Merton Villa, in the Island of Nevis, West Indies, the Reverend James Bovell, M.D., in the 63rd year of his age, for many years a resident of Toronto.