

## Family Department.

### A SONG OF SEXAGESIMA.

BY W. B. C.

Lord of the Harvest hear!  
We sow the seed in patience and in hope;  
'Tis Thine the harvestage to make appear;  
The golden gates of vintage cheer to open.

One gaze beyond the bourne  
Of a new year that hastens on its way.  
And once again I hear, o'er snows, return  
The bells of Christmas Day.  
Yet 'tis almost time that we should bare  
The festooned walls, and all reluctant tear  
The star of His dear birth from yonder place.  
The altar of His grace.

At eve of Sexagesima I stand  
Before the image of the storm and snow;  
And yet I seem to see on either hand  
The Christmas lights and Easter's sunny glow.  
Oh, feast that's gone! feast that I soon shall see!  
Which is most dear, the hope or memory?

## JULIE.

### CHAPTER XVII.

#### AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

Next afternoon they were in the very middle of bustle, when Munda ushered into the dining-room, where both were hard at work, an unexpected visitor.

Rose had to blink her eyes and look again before she could believe she saw aright. Was it, could it be, Miss Templeton?

There was the small spare figure, and the sharp thin face, and the proud eyes that had never seemed to rest on them when she had passed the little Bridgeses by.

Rose crimsoned—a little nervous trick of hers—and put her hand on auntie's arm to attract her attention; for Miss Bridges' back was turned, bending over a box.

Somewhat auntie did not look as much surprised as Rose imagined she should have been when the visitor called her by her Christian name.

"Rachel," said Miss Templeton, "how do you do?" and put out her hand as easily as if they had parted only a week ago the best of friends.

Auntie did not speak; she took her hand, and they both stood for a second looking into each other's eyes.

Miss Templeton was not so much at her ease as she had first appeared; her thin lips gave a nervous twitch as she began to speak.

"I have been away," she said, "out of England, for the last eight weeks. I came home only yesterday; and only then I heard of your loss—your losses, Rachel."

Auntie murmured something. She could not speak; old memories seemed crowding into her mind. She looked at Miss Templeton with a kind of far-off gaze while Rose almost gasped at the situation.

Was the mystery with which the little Bridgeses had always surrounded Miss Templeton going to be cleared up at last?

"I have a proposition to make," Miss Templeton said, in her rather peremptory voice. "I want one of Frederick's children to bring up as my own; it is the reason of my coming here to-day. It is a girl I want; there are so many, you can spare me one. There is one very much like Frederick. I stopped and spoke to her about a year ago. I know by the likeness she was Frederick's child."

A startled, agonized look in auntie's face made her pause a while; then she went on in a pleading kind of way, as if she fancied auntie was to refuse.

"Let me have her, Rachel; I can give her a happy home. You have all the rest. She has poor Frederick's eyes," she added, with a soft-

ed look. "Give her to me. I have set my heart upon it. It will be one charge less for you."

Rose gasped more and more, and her heart beat painfully. It was true, then, after all; and Julie had been quite right. Miss Templeton had stopped her once, and asked her her name that day. It was no fancy on her part, nor had she mistaken the face. Julie had been quite right, after all, and they all had been quite wrong. What would the others say? And Miss Templeton must have known papa quite well, since she called him by his Christian name.

"You have not heard? Miss Bridges answered, in a quivering voice. 'I thought you understood—you said 'losses,' Margaret. I have lost one of my children, too. Did you not know?'"

"Not Julie?" she asked, in a quick hard voice. "She told me her name was Julie. Is it Julie, Rachel?"

"It is Julie," answered auntie, with a cry. A bitter look stole over Miss Templeton's face, her thin lips twitched. "Then I am too late, after all!" she said, and took a rapid walk across the room.

"Tell me about it," she said presently, coming back to where auntie stood. "My servants told me a story about a child who was inquired for at my house, and who was afterwards found drowned. Was it Frederick's child? Why was she inquired for at Beechwood?"

Then auntie told her all; showed her the little letter Julie had written, and explained the reason why—the reason as she had gleaned it from the other children—till tears stood in the listener's eyes.

There was a look of triumph also in her face—triumph that the child she had caressed that day had carried the memory of her all along, and trusted in her so implicitly; but the bitter feeling in her heart was greater still—bitter regret that in her proud reserve she had neglected to foster the love she had won so easily. No child had ever taken a fancy to her before; and this was the child she had meditated taking to her home.

Rose's pretty face had no attraction for her. She looked at her with hard, cold eyes, stillly asked her age, and the ages of her brothers and sisters too; then, being foiled in her object she had set her heart upon, she bade good-bye as if the other Bridgeses were perfectly indifferent to her, and rolled away in her carriage with its "spanking pair of grays."

"Auntie," asked Rose, "did Miss Templeton know papa?"

"Yes, dear," said auntie; "she was a great friend of his once."

"That's why she took a fancy to Julie, then. Julie was very like papa sometimes. She was the only one of us who had gray eyes; the rest of us all have blue."

"Julie was the only one like poor papa; you others are just like you mother, Rose."

"Auntie, how pleased poor Julie would have been if she had known that Miss Templeton had come to ask you to let her take her to her house! And she wouldn't have crowed over us at all—she never did. We used to tease her about Miss Templeton," added Rose, with tears trembling in her eyes. "We never believed Miss Templeton had spoken to her at all. Julie was quite right, after all. I wish I could tell her!" sobbed Rose.

Auntie did not reply; she dropped a few tears on the things she was packing up, and blew her nose rather loud.

In a little while Rose wiped her eyes, and began to speak again. "Auntie, why don't we know Miss Templeton now? Why does she keep herself so much away? She seems so proud to notice us, even. I thought she spoke as if she had been very fond of papa. And she's related to us, you say?"

"Yes, dear," said auntie, in an absent sort of way; "she's a second cousin of yours." Then looking up, and finding Rose's eyes still watching her, and far from satisfied, auntie—unlike the auntie of other days—told her a little more. "Long ago, when papa was quite a young man, he was engaged to Miss Templeton, Rose. She was very nice and pleasant then—not like the Miss Templeton you know. We called her Maggie, too," auntie added, with a little smile at her niece's wondering eyes. "But through some misunderstanding she broke the engagement off, and we gradually ceased to be friends. Papa took to wandering then, and went to this place and that; but three or four years later he met your mother, dear, and asked her to marry him. They were very happy together," auntie said.

"Oh! auntie, and—go on," pleaded Rose.

"There is nothing more to tell"—auntie had to smile again—"except that poor papa lost a great deal of money shortly after, and that your mother died when Puff was born, and that I came to take care of you all."

"No, no; about Miss Templeton, I mean; wasn't she very sorry after?"

"I am not in all Miss Templeton's secrets, Rose; how can I tell you that?"

"She never married," romancing Rose said in a thoughtful way. "She must have been sorry, of course. I knew there was something about Miss Templeton like that—I always told Elsie so; only—only—" Rose drew herself up and paused with a guilty flush.

"Only what?" asked auntie, looking somewhat amused.

"Perhaps you wouldn't like it, perhaps I oughtn't to say, only I thought that you and Miss Templeton bowed so coldly to each other because she had something to do in crossing you, you know, about—about somebody." Rose broke down lamely, and crimsoned to the roots of her hair.

Auntie smiled a little—she couldn't help it perhaps. "Then don't think so any more," she said, "for you know the reason now."

She was not going to tell Rose any of her secrets, it seemed, for she busied herself again with her work and said not another word. But she was absent-minded, and took up the wrong thing once or twice, and there was a far-off look in her eyes as if she were thinking of the past.

Miss Templeton's past, perhaps. Rose wished she had told her more.

The boys came in just then; they had been off on an errand for auntie, and Rose flew to tell them of the unexpected visit. No one could have been more surprised. Lance's eyes widened like Puff's in astonishment; and Guy listened with a grave, twitching face.

"Julie was right, after all," he said, and suddenly turned away.

"Oh, don't Guy—don't!" she cried.

"I missed her so awfully!" he said with a sob. "She was a first-rate little thing, you know; she always got my slippers for me, and fetched me all my books. A dozen times I'm going to call out 'Julie!' when I stop myself in time."

Rose looked into the empty dorecot, and sobbed for sympathy.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

#### WHAT A MISER MAY BECOME.

And Julie? What of little Julie all this time? How was it faring with her? And why had not John Gerring come to claim the promised reward? Hadn't he seen the notice put up describing the child he had found?

Oh yes, most certainly he had—you may trust sharp John Gerring for that; but—you were expecting a "but," I dare say—but the reward was only ten pounds!

"Ten pounds!" John scoffed as he scratched his head. "Only ten pounds, indeed! Well,