

THAT WINTER.

BY EDITH AUBURN.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Mabel Rivers sat in her room, a dreary sense of isolation weighing down her spirits. The day had been one of trial, or rather a series of trials; every hour of it seemed barbed to wound her. In the morning she had stood by the bedside of Lambert's mother-in-law while the unprepared soul took its flight. Leaving the harrowing scene, and yearning for Christian sympathy, she met Miss Lewis, who turned away from her cordial greeting. Quickly resenting the intended slight, she cut the next bowing acquaintance she met. Then conscience upbraided her with returning evil for evil; and so the day passed in a struggle between it and pride. Now, within the precincts of her own room—the only spot she felt to be sacred from the intrusion of the world—she would gladly have shut the door upon her annoyances; but, instead, it was to be opened to a stranger, who, she feared, would increase them. After spending a few moments in deep thought, and looking upward, she decided to grant Kitty's request. She said aloud:—

"Perhaps the Lord is sending her here, and He may have a blessing in store for us both. These trials that He sends must have some use. Does He send them? or do they spring from the ground? No, they are from Him, for nothing happens to His people without His permission. And though I have scorned even to admit to myself that they cost me a thought, He has let them multiply until they oppress me. Dear little Lucy's happy death gave me to see He had a use for me here; but what benefit my visit is to myself, individually, is yet shrouded in mystery. I will not again say that these trials are not worth my attention. What He permits is for our profit. It was He who allowed Edgar Allan, a

young man whose weakness I so thoroughly despise, to pass me, with Hilda Stiggins, as though he did not know me. Well, I have but a few weeks more to stay, and seeing my time is so short, I will seek to learn what, before coming here, I thought I knew so perfectly—entire submission to His will."

That evening Edgar would have been delighted had Mabel pleaded headache and excused herself from the drawing-room; he felt ashamed of his rudeness to her, and wished, if possible, to avoid her. But when he saw there was no likelihood of her absentsing herself, he could not long resist the influence of her sweet voice, as it blended with Miss Weldon's powerful one, in some favorite hymn, and he stole quietly into the room. Mabel, conscious of being sustained in returning good for evil, met him as though he had ever treated her with respect and kindness.

"She has no spirit," he whispered to Fred, whom he had made his confidant. "If any one treated me so I would cut them forever. I believe Mrs. Allan is right when she says, 'Nothing seems to affect her.'"

"Perhaps she did not see you," suggested Fred.

"I really hope she did not, for she is the sweetest and prettiest girl I know. I have a great mind to cut that Hilda Stiggins for prompting me to do it. But if I did, her mother would come to ask the reason why."

"Do," said his brother; "I would pay her in her own coin." Miss Rivers is worth a dozen like her."

The music here ceased, and Miss Weldon called Edgar to take the bass of a new song, "half sacred," she explained to her uncle, who was sitting, eye-glass in hand, smiling approval at the performers, and