...UT A HOME.

...ward P. Roe, Author of "Barriers Burned Away," "Opening a Chestnut Burr," "Success with Small Fruits," Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER XL.—*Continued.*

When Mildred returned she found her mother nervously prostrated. "I've had a turn," was her only explanation. Her...an spirit was terrified by her awful...hbors, and not for the world would she...d another feather's weight to the burdens...der which they faltered by involving her...mily in a prosecution of the vile impostor...who had sickened her with the exposure of...horrible trade.

"Mamma," cried Mildred, "we must leave this place. It is killing you."

"I wish we could leave it, dear," sighed...poor woman. "I think I'd be better...where else."

"We shall leave it," cried the girl resolutely. "Let the rent go. I had already...decided upon it, and now I'll...th Mrs Wheaton to-morrow and find...s among more respectable people."

...e events of the evening confirmed her...ose, for the young roughs that ren...oused nightly at the entrance of the...passageway determined that they...d no longer submit to the "unpish airs"...he sisters, but "tach 'em" that since...lived in the same house they were no...er than their neighbors. Therefore, as...he boldly brushed by them as usual on...return from the shop, one young fel...with a wink to his comrades, followed...and where the passage was darkest...his around her waist and pressed upon...cheek a resounding kiss. In response...e came from the entrance a roar of jeering laughter. But the young ruffian found...antly to his sorrow that he had aroused...tigress. Belle was strong and furious...n the insult, and her plump hand came...n on the fellow's nose with a force that...ed the blood to flow copiously. After...quick impulse to anger and self-defence...ed she ran sobbing like a child to Mildred, and declared she would not stay another day in the vile den. Mildred was white with anger, and paced the room excitedly for a few moments.

"Oh, God, that we had a father!" she gasped. "There, Belle, let us be patient," she continued after a few moments; "we can't contend with such wretches. I promise you that this shall be your last day in this place. We ought to have left before."

Then, as the girls grew calmer, they resolved not to tell either their father or Roger, fearing that they might become embroiled in a dangerous and disgraceful quarrel involving their presence in a police court. Mildred had given her mother a sedative to quiet her trembling nerves, and she was sleeping in one of the bedrooms, and so happily was not aware of Belle's encounter.

Mr. Jocelyn soon came in, and, for the first time since Mildred's warning was a little the worse for liquor, but he had the self-control to keep quiet, and after a few mouthfuls of supper went to his room overcome by the stupor he had sought. After the children were sleeping the girls gladly welcomed Roger, for he had become the chief source of light and hope in their saddened lives. And he did brighten and cheer them wonderfully, for, content with a long and prosperous day's work, and full of the hopefulness and courage of youth, he imparted hopeful fortitude to them in spite of all that was so depressing.

"Come, girls," he said at last, "you need some oxygen. The air is close and stifling in this den of a house, and outside the evening is clear and bracing. Let's have a stroll."

"We can't go far," said Mildred, "for mamma is sleeping, and I would not have her wake and be frightened for anything."

"Well, we'll only go around a block or two. You'll feel the stronger for it, and be in better condition to move to-morrow," for Mildred had told him of her purpose, and he had promised to help them get settled on the following evening. When they reached the end of the dark passageway they feared that trouble was brewing, for a score of dark, coarse faces lowered at them, and the fellow that Belle had punished glared at her above his bandaged face. Paying no heed to them, however, they took a brief, quick walk, and returned to find the entrance blocked by an increasing number of dangerous-looking young ruffians.

"Stand aside," said Roger sternly.

A big fellow knocked off his hat in response, and received instantly a blow in the eye which would have felled him were he not sustained by the crowd, who now closed on the young man.

"Run up the street and call for police," he said to the girls, but they were snatched back and held by some of the gang, and hands placed over their mouths, yet not before they had uttered two piercing cries.

Roger, after a fierce desperate struggle, got his back to the wall and struck blows that were like those of a sledge-hammer. He was dealing, however, with some fairly trained pugilists, and was suffering severely, when a policeman rushed in, clubbing right and left. The gang dispersed instantly; but two were captured. The girls, half fainting from excitement and terror, were conducted to their room by Roger, and then they applied palliatives to the wounds of their knight, with a solicitude and affection which made the bruises welcome indeed to the young fellow. They were in terror at the idea of his departure, for the building was like a seething caldron. He reassured them by promising to remain until all was quiet and the police also informed them that the house would be under surveillance until morning.

On the following day, with Mrs. Wheaton's aid, they found rooms elsewhere, and Roger, after appearing as witness against the rowdies that had been captured, and informed his employers of what had occurred, gave the remaining hours to the efficient aid of his friends.

CHAPTER XLI.

GLINTS OF SUNSHINE.

Their new rooms at first promised remarkably well. They were on the ground floor of a large tenement that frouted on a rather narrow street, and their neighbors seemed quiet, well-disposed people. Mr. Wentworth soon called and congratulated them on the change. Mrs. Wheaton frequently came to give Mrs. Jocelyn a "clipping and," as she phrased it, but her ciminations did not extend to her work which was rounded with the completeness of good will. Roger rarely missed an evening without giving an hour or two to the girls, often taking them out to walk, with now and then a cheap excursion on the river or a ramble in Central Park. In the latter resort they usually spent part of Sunday afternoon, going thither directly from the chapel. Mildred's unhealthful morbidness was passing away. She had again taken her old place, and her face was gaining a serenity which had long been absent.

One of the great wishes of her heart now had good prospect of being fulfilled, for her father had at last consented to go to an institution wherein he could receive scientific treatment suited to his case. The outlook was growing so hopeful that even Mrs. Jocelyn was rallying into something like hopefulness and courage, and her health was slowly improving. She was one whose life was chiefly sustained by her heart and the well-being of those she loved.

Belle also was improving greatly. The memorable interview with Roger, already described, had a lasting influence and did much to banish the giddiness of unthinking, ignorant girlhood, and the recklessness arising from an unhappy life. Now that the world was brightening again, she brightened with it. Among his new associates Roger found two or three fine, manly fellows, who were grateful indeed for an introduction to the handsome, lively girl, and scarcely a week passed during May and June that some inexpensive evening excursion was not enjoyed, and thoroughly enjoyed too, even by Mildred. Roger was ever at his best when in her society. His talk was bright and often witty, and his spirit of fun as genuine and contagious as that of Belle herself. He was now sincerely happy in the consciousness of Mildred's perfect trust and strong affection, believing that gradually, and even before the girl was aware of it, she would learn to give more than friendship. It was his plan to make himself essential to her life, indeed a part of it, and he was apparently succeeding. Mildred had put her fate into his hands. She felt that she owed so much to him that she was ready to keep her promise literally. At any time for months he might have bound her to him by promises that would never have been broken; he knew it, and she was aware of his knowledge, but when, instead of taking advantage of her gratitude he avoided all sentiment, and treated her with a cordial frankness as if she were in truth simply the friend he asked her to become, all of her old constraint in his presence was unthought of, and she welcomed the glances of his dark, intent eyes which interpreted her thoughts even before they were spoken. The varying expressions of his face made it plain enough to her that he liked and appreciated her thoughts, and that his admiration and affection were only strengthened by their continued companionship. Moreover, she was well content with what she regarded as her own progress toward a warmer regard for him.

One moonlit night in June they made up a little party for an excursion on a steamer plying down the bay. Belle had had two attendants, and would have been just as well pleased were there two or three more. As she once asserted, she could have kept them "all jolly." During the earlier hours Roger had been as merry and full of nonsense as Belle, but on their return he and Mildred had taken seats a little apart from the others and drifted into some talk relating to one of his studies, he in a simple, lucid manner explaining to her the latest theories on a disputed question. She surprised and pleased him by saying, with a little pathetic accent in her voice,

"Oh, Roger, you are leaving me far, far behind."

"What do you mean, Millie?"

"Why, you are climbing the peaks of knowledge at a great pace, and what's to become of poor little me, that have no chance to climb at all worth naming? You won't want a friend who doesn't know anything, and can't understand what you are thinking about."

"I'll wait for you, Millie; rest assured you shall never be left alone."

"No, that won't do at all, she replied, and she was in earnest now. There is one thing when in you will find me as obstinate as an Atwood, and that is never to let our friendship retard your progress or render your success doubtful, now that you have struck out for yourself. Your relatives think that I—that we will be a drag upon you; I have resolved that we shall not be, and you know that I have a little will of my own as well as yourself. You must not wait for me in any sense of the word, for you know how very proud I am, and all my pride is staked on your success. It ought to have been dead long ago, but it seems just as strong as ever."

"And I'm proud of your pride. You are a soldier, Millie, and it isn't possible for you to say, 'I surrender.'"

"You are mistaken. When you saved me from prison; when you gave nearly all that you had that papa might have the chance which I trust will restore his manhood, I surrendered, and no one knew it better than you did."

"Pardon me, Mille; the gates of the citadel are closed, and ever have been. Even your will cannot open them—no, not even your extravagant sense of gratitude for what it would be my happiness to do in any case. That something which was once prejudice, dislike, repulsion, has retreated into the depths of your heart, and it won't yield—at least it hasn't yet. But Mille, I shall be very patient. Just as truly as if you were the daughter of a millionaire, your heart shall guide your action."

"You are a royal fellow, Roger, she faltered. "If you were not so genuinely honest, I would think you wonderfully shrewd in your policy."

"Well, perhaps the honest course is always the shrewdest in the long run," he replied laughing, and with a deep gladness in his tone, for her words gave a little encouragement. "But your charge that I am leaving you behind as I pursue my studies has a grain of truth in it as far as mere book learning goes. In your goodness, Millie, and all that is most admirable, I shall always follow afar off. Since I can't wait for you, as you say, and you have so little time to read and study yourself, I am going to recite my lessons to you—that is, some of them, those that would interest you—and by telling you about what I have learned I will fix it all in my mind more thoroughly."

Mildred was exceedingly pleased with the idea. "I don't see why this isn't possible to some extent," she said gladly, "and I can't tell you how much hope and comfort it gives me. That I've had so little time to read and cultivate my mind has been one of the great privations of our poverty, but if you will patiently try to make me understand a little of what you are studying, I won't relapse into barbarism. Oh, Roger, how good you are to me."

"That is like saying, how good I am to myself! Let me tell you, Millie, in all sincerity, that this plan promises as much for me as for you. Your mind is so quick, and your look at things so differently, that I often get new and better ideas of the subject after talking it over with you. The country boy that you woke up last summer was right in believing that you could be an invaluable friend, for I can't tell you how much richer life has become to me."

"Roger, how I misunderstood you! how blind and stupid I was! God was raising up for me the best friend a girl ever had, and I acted so shamefully that anybody but you would have been driven away."

"You do yourself injustice, and I wouldn't let any one else judge you so harshly."

Afrer reaching her room that night, Mildred thought, "I do believe mamma was right, and that an old-fashioned Southern girl, such as she says that I am, can learn to love a second time. Roger is so genuinely good and strong! It rests me to be with him, and he gives some of his own strength and courage. To-night, for the first time since he told me everything so gently and honestly, has anything been said of that which I can see in his mind all the time, and I brought on all that was said myself. I can now read his thoughts better than he can read mine, and it would be mean not to give him a little of the hope and encouragement that he so richly deserves. It troubles me, however, that my mind and heart are so tranquil when I'm with him. That's not the way I once felt," she sighed. "He seems like the dearest brother a girl ever had—no, not that exactly; he is to me the friend he calls himself, and I'd be content to have things go on this way as long as we lived."

"Millie," cried Belle roguishly, "what did Roger say to you to call out such sweet smiles and tender sighs?"

The young girl started, and flushed slightly. "We were talking about astronomy," she said brusquely.

"Well, I should think so, for the effects in your appearance are heavenly. If he could have seen you as you have appeared for the last ten minutes, he would be more desperately in love than ever. Oh, Millie, you are so pretty that I am half in love with you myself."

"Nonsense! you are a giddy child. Tell me about your own favorites, and whom of them you like best."

"I like them all best. Do you think I'm going to be such a little goose as to lie myself down to one? These are but the advance guard of scores. Still I shall always like these ones best because they are kind to me now while I'm only a 'shop lady.'"

"You mustn't flirt, Belle."

"I'm not flirting—only having a good time, and they know it. I'm not a bit sentimental—only jolly, you know. When the right time comes, and I've had my fun, I'm going to take my pick of the best."

"Well, that's sensible. Belle, darling, are not Roger's friends better than those underhanded fellows who could not look mamma in the eyes?"

"Oh, Millie," said the impulsive girl with a rush of tears, "don't speak of those horrid days. I was an ignorant, reckless fool—I was almost beside myself with despair and unhappiness; I could kiss Roger's hands from gratitude. Look here, Millie, if you don't marry him I will, for there's no one that can compare with him."

"Come, now, don't make me jealous."

"I wish I could. I've a great mind to flirt with him a little, just to wake up your old stupid heart. Still I think you are coming on very well. Oh, Millie how I could dance at your wedding! Solid as I am, my feet would scarcely touch the floor."

Mildred laughed and said softly, "It would be a pity to deny you so much pleasure, Belle." Then she added resolutely, "No more talk about weddings, if you please. For long, long years Roger must give his whole mind to his studies. His relatives say that we will hang helplessly upon him and spoil his life, but we'll prove them mistaken, Belle. I'd work my fingers off to give him the chance that he'll make so much of, for I'm as proud of him as you are."

"That's the way to talk," exulted Belle. "I see how it's all coming out. He'll stand up head, as I told you, and I told you, too, that he'd win you in spite of yourself. Roger Atwood does all he undertakes—it's his way."

"Well, we'll see," was the half-smiling, half-sighing answer, but sanguine Belle had no doubt concerning the future, and soon her long eyelashes drooped over her glowing cheeks in untroubled sleep.

"Oh, how good for us all is the sunlight of a little happiness and hope!" Mildred thought. "Darling mamma is reviving, Bell is blossoming like a blush rose, and I—well, thank God for Roger Atwood's friendship. May I soon be able to think him for his love."

An, Mildred Jocelyn, you have still much to learn. A second love can grow up in the heart, but not really in one like yours.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MONEY AND TRADE.

Suspending for the Holiday:

The Toronto and Montreal stock exchanges and the produce exchange of the latter were closed on Saturday and will be closed to-day. The London stock exchange will also be closed to-day.

NEW YORK, Dec. 31.—Cotton exchange closed. Flour—Receipts 26,000 brls, firm prices without decided change, sales 14,000 brls. Rye flour steady; $4 50 to $5 20. Cornmeal steady, yellow $3 75 to $6 20. Wheat—Receipts 45,000 bush, closed, strong, sales 820,000 bush, including 116,000 bush spot $8 80, exports 61,000 bush; No 2 red $1 42½ to $1 43½, No 1 white $1 40½ to $1 41, No 2 red Jan $1 42½. Rye quiet, 93c to 97c. Barley firmer, 2 rowed state 90c to 92c, No 2 Canada $1 12. Choice malt unchanged. Corn—Receipts 11,000 bush, closed firm, sales 657,000 bush, including 169,000 bush spot; exports 82,000 bush; No 2 70c to 70½c, southern yellow 68c to 69c, No 2 Jan 70½c. Oats—Receipts 12,000 bush, quiet, sales 172,000 bush, mixed 50c to 51½c, white 50c to 53c, No 2 Jan 50c. to 50½c. Hay firm, 65c to 70c. Hops unchanged. Coffee steady, 9½c to 11½c. Sugar firm, standard A 8¾c to 8¾, cut loaf and crushed 9¾c. Molasses unchanged. Rice steady. Petroleum nominal. Tallow firm, 7½c to 8c. Potatoes firm, peerless $2 50 to $2 75, rose $2 75 to $3 12. Eggs firm, for fresh 29c to 30c. Pork nominally unchanged. Beef quiet, cut meats steady, middles unchanged. Lard firm, $11 25 Butter firm, 18c to 40c. Cheese firm, 9c to 13c.

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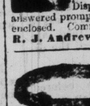

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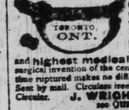

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