

work to prepare a room. The child was placed in a warm bed, and Ralph was told to wait quietly by the stove in the hall.

The doctor came immediately, and he at once pronounced little Susie's case to be a case of fever, and one in all likelihood to require most critical attention. During his investigations it seemed to him necessary to question the boy, and Ralph was requested to step forward to the front of the hall and answer any interrogation the court-mannered doctor might choose to put. Ralph went through his catechism, and made a very favorable impression as he did so. There was truth on his lip and in his eye; this Doctor Blanchard saw for himself.

Ralph gave the doctor a detailed account of all that had passed since before their flight from home and after. He concealed nothing.

"Well," said the doctor, after listening carefully to all that Ralph had to say, "your sister is in for a severe illness, and she'll most likely stay here till there's a change one way or another. What do you suppose you'll do—go back to your father?"

Ralph considered for a moment. It would be painful to go back, it would be humiliating, but what else could he do? What else ought he to do? The sense of duty was a ill strong in him, and the sense of affection for his father was even yet not dead.

"I don't know what to do," Ralph said. "Please tell me, sir, do you think I ought to go back?"

It was now the doctor's turn to consider. He had listened to the boy's story, and his experience enabled him to make additions to it. He knew more of the wretchedness, the drunkenness, and the cruelty of that home in Piper's Court than Ralph had told him.

"Just give me your address in full," he said, taking out his pocket-book.

"When he had written it down he said, 'Just wait here a moment. I will speak to Miss Frere again or to Miss Roland.'

When the doctor went up-stairs again he found, somewhat to his surprise, that little Susie was already delicious. Miss Roland and Miss Frere were both beside the bed. Susie's beautiful face was flushed with fever, and her silken yellow curls fell over the white pillow. She did not look out of place in that dainty room. Her small parched lips were moving fast, telling strange and tales of the things she had endured, of the things she had remembered, of the things she had dreaded. Not one word of childish pleasure, of childish hope, fell from this little fever-stricken thing.

"Father, father," she cried, tossing her arms wildly. "I will be good, and Ralph will be good; we will be good every day if you don't beat us any more."

"Mother would love me if she could come back, and she would love Ralph too, and she would make a fire, and we should never, never go under the dark arches."

"Oh, it was dark out in the night, and it was rainy, and it was cold, and it was darker still under that archway, and the water ran down and down, and I thought it would run over me, but I asked Jesus not to let it run over me, and it never did. But it was so near that I was glad when I saw the daylight."

So the little thing went on with her sad, painful reminiscences. There were tears in good old Miss Roland's eyes when Dr. Blanchard beckoned her out of the room.

The doctor told her how exactly the child's delicious ravings coincided with the straightforward tale he had heard from the boy.

"And now what is to be done with the lad?" said Dr. Blanchard. "I am in doubt as to whether it is my duty to recommend him to go back to that drunken scamp in Piper's Court."

"Go back!" cried Miss Roland, "certainly not, certainly not! God himself sent the little things to my door; and let me not incur the reproach, 'I was an hanger-on, and ye gave me no meat.' No! No! I find the father for me and I shall owe you thanks; till that is done the children will remain here, if you please."

CHAPTER V.—THE DAWN OF BETTER DAYS.

Richard Redmayne looked very much out of place as he stood beside Susie's bed. Being very much in awe of the doctor and the ladies he had tried to improve his appearance. But his best clothes had been pawned long ago, and were past redemption. His soiled and ragged coat was a painful contrast to Susie's delicate surroundings. He would fain have rushed from the spot, he was so

ashamed of himself; but still he stood spell-bound by the earnest little face that lay before him, and the still more earnest words that fell from the small parched lips.

"Oh father, Ralph can't help it when he doesn't earn more money; when I grow up I mean to earn some too; and I'm going to wash and darn your things and Ralph's; but you won't beat us then, and you wouldn't beat us now if you didn't drink that stuff out of bottles."

"Oh don't drink any more of it! Ralph tells me when we are quite alone that we should be so happy if you didn't take it."

"Oh, do break the bottle! Ralph will get us nice breakfasts then. And when you don't take his money he's going to buy me a dress and take me to Sunday-school. Oh do take me to-day, I want to hear them sing the hymns that Ralph used to learn."

Her tone was bitterly sad. She was a child of misery. Her voice had never had the musical ring of a happy child. Yet it was full of plaintive sweetness. So she went on appealing to this misguided man. Those who stood near looked upon him as a hard-hearted wretch, whom it would be almost useless trying to soften.

While Miss Roland and Miss Frere were watching Redmayne, trying to read the expression of his face, wondering within themselves if the child's words touched him, he was making the bravest effort to seem impassive, and to behave as he imagined he would be expected to behave in a house like Miss Roland's.

While Miss Roland was thinking prayerfully whether it would be worth while to attempt doing anything toward this man's reformation, God himself was taking it in hand and working wonders that would one day seem like miracles, even to the man himself. When he left the room Miss Roland went out to the landing with him.

"Does it not grieve you to see your poor little girl in such a state as this?" Miss Roland asked.

"Grieve me!" the man said. "I'd give my life to save hers."

The words and the tone were like sudden insight to the elderly lady, who thought she knew so very much of the world and yet met with a fresh surprise daily.

"But you have not cared much for your children," she said.

The man passed as if bewildered by the inward survey of himself.

"I cared more than I knew," he said, presently; "and it stung me and left me wretched when I knew I had done 'em away. I'll be wretcheder still, I'm thinking, when little Susie goes to where her mother is."

Richard Redmayne went away feeling very unhelpful, but he left hope behind him. Miss Roland's thoughts of him were by no means so hard or so desponding as they had been. It was a deep joy to her to think that she might in some humble way help in raising this fallen man.

When Redmayne entered his own dwelling that night he was in a very unenviable state of mind. He sincerely wished to give up strong drink, which had been the curse of his life; but his love for it and its power over him was as strong as ever. He was torn by the desire to be a better man and by the cravings of a habit long indulged in, which he felt unable to conquer.

Again Richard Redmayne was summoned to Susie's bedside. It was not expected she had many hours to live. But the little thing was quite content to die. It is seldom that the young cling to life as the old do. Besides, what had life held that was dear to Susie—only Ralph. No tender feminine hand had smoothed the little difficulties of childhood for Susie.

The group around Susie's bed was very sad and tearful. It seemed as if the child who had been so friendless during her short life was not to be laid in her grave unwept.

Slowly the little life appeared to be ebbing away. Once she looked up inquiringly and said:

"Will it be long before I see the angels; and will they take me to Jesus?"

But not yet was the crown ready for the child-martyr. The little feet had yet to grow and tread this probationary life through many sorrows interspersed by much happiness.

Just as she was expected to breathe her last she quietly fell asleep.

Richard Redmayne had stood by the bedside in silence save for an occasional yes or no in answer to a question. The man's

sorrow was as intense as it could be. When he understood that danger was over for the present his gratitude was as silent as his sorrow had been. He made no new resolutions as he stood there. It did not seem to him necessary to make any. He felt that the impossibility would be to go back to the old life that he had lived before. He shrank from the thought of it, as a man shrinks from the thought of the death that he has just escaped. He seemed to himself to be standing on a rock between two seas. A dark, stormy sea that he had passed, and a sea in the future before him that might yet be what he chose to make it.

Miss Frere was perceptive and sympathizing. She seemed to understand without words how the man had sinned, and how intensely capable he was of sorrow for his sin. She was not one to break a bruised reed; but rather to help the bruised reed to stand up straight a-ain, and to bear its own burden with bravery.

"Come with me," she said to him, taking him aside into a little homely room, known as Miss Frere's study.

"You have lost your regular work?" asked Miss Frere.

"Yes, ma'am, I lost that long ago, and no wonder. For two years past I've never had nothing but a bit of work just when they were pushed."

"Who do you mean by they?"

"I was meaning my masters, Axby, and Hunter, the coach-builders."

"You'll have seen a good deal of Mr. Axby, I suppose?" said Miss Frere.

"Yes, I used to see him every day; he were a good master, and he knew I were a good hand, but he couldn't put up with me no longer."

"Do you think he would take you back again?"

"I have no heart to hope that he would."

"Should you mind my asking him?"

"Mind!" ejaculated the man; "I'd be more grateful to you than ever I were to anybody in my life before."

"Well, then, listen to me. If you will sign the temperance pledge to-night and determine honestly to keep it, I'll go and see Mr. Axby to-morrow."

Richard Redmayne did not hesitate; not longer than was right and good for him to do.

Miss Frere had no wish that he should act rashly. She saw with satisfaction that his cheeks were paler, his lips quivering, and the hand that held the pen tremulous with emotion. As he laid the pen down he said quietly and under his breath, "So help me God!" and Miss Frere said shortly after, "I think He will help you."

CHAPTER VI.—MISS FRERE'S SUCCESS.

The weeks passed on very pleasantly, in the luxurious suburban home, during Susie's convalescence.

While she was an invalid Miss Frere had talked to her so much of the love of Jesus and of heaven, that the child had almost longed to go. But now that she had gained her strength, her new home was so pleasant, that to her small imagination she could not think that heaven would have been happier. The little wistful blue eyes looked out from the bay-window upon a placid and peaceful scene. Undulating fields, dotted here and there with tall trees and stately villas, stretched away to the borders of a wide moor. Within, a bright fire was burning; in one corner stood the piano that Miss Frere had used when she was a child; in another was a work-table inlaid with ivory; and all about the room there was an agreeable confusion of books, music, sketches, finished drawings, and beautiful half-finished work.

Susie was sitting by the fire, thinking herself a big girl because she was learning to sew. How many little cold and shuddering would have been glad to rest upon that warm, soft hearth rug, beside Susie's! It was as natural to Miss Frere to impart knowledge as it was to acquire it. She was always teaching, though she was not aware of it. Her love for intellectual things was too passionate and real to allow of any mixture of piteous pity. She carried about her a halo of refinement and knowledge, and anyone who came into her presence could be raised to a higher intellectual level if they chose.

Little Susie was an apt pupil. Her tiny fingers could already play the "Spanish Chant." She could recite poetry, and she was trying very earnestly to write her own name. For many years after Miss Frere carefully superintended Susie's education

Not long after this Miss Frere sent for Redmayne and told him of the condition upon which he was again to be employed.

"I have, of course, told Mr. Axby that you have signed the temperance pledge," said Miss Frere, "and he rejoiced when he heard it. Upon your keeping that pledge everything depends. Not only Mr. Axby's favor and good-will, and not only your own health and prosperity, but upon this same thing hangs the well-being of your two little ones."

"You have it now in your power to make or to marter their future lives to an extent you little dream of. You can take them back to such a home as the home you made for them before, and you can make them acquainted with every kind of suffering."

"On the other hand, humbly speaking, it is in your power to make their home the reverse of what it was."

"You can keep them entirely from want. You can give them such training, such education, as will enable them to make their existence a noble and elevated thing."

"You know that you cannot do this in your own strength; if you try to walk alone you will fall. Help is always ready. If you seek it you will find it."

"Yes, ma'am, but seeking isn't easy."

"Easy, no!" said Miss Frere, "no noble thing was ever easy!"

Richard Redmayne never broke his pledge although he was often strongly tempted to do so.

THE END.

(FOR THE WEEKLY MESSENGER.) THE WOMAN'S WORLD.

We would like everyone who takes an interest in this our home department, to write us letters on subjects of household management, and any of those subjects which are specially interesting to women.

To those who have put off making their holiday presents till the last moment we would suggest a useful article which is easily made—a letter writing portfolio. Bind three or four thick sheets of blotting paper together in the shape of a book with stiff cardboard of the size the portfolio is desired, for covers. The blotting paper may be simply tied together by means of a bright ribbon. Often such blotters bear the appropriate inscription:

"Impressions from the pen of ———."

"Cooks in Paris are said to use vaseline instead of butter for softening in pastry. Barbarous! May their reign also be shortened."

Let every woman read the following warning for New Year's Day addressed especially to the women of England but appropriate the wide world over.

Women of England, I charge you in the name of God, and as you must answer for it at the great day of account, be determined that you will not be a party to the mischief which must follow from the daily use of alcohol.—*Dr. A. Carpenter.*

The custom of giving intoxicating drinks to callers on New Year's Day is dying out in this country, but it is still kept up in some households and the warning is to these.

CHRISTMAS TREES.

Christmas trees are made very brilliant by dipping the ends of the branches in a solution of alum and water—a pound of alum to a pail of hot water. The branches should remain steeping for a few hours. Turn the tree around until as many branches have been dipped as will make the tree pretty—gilded walnuts, chains of silver paper, little angels cut out of paste-board, pop corn made into long strings, oranges and apples are the standbys to ornament a tree. In some countries plates filled with moss are put outside of the windows by the little ones, when the little child Kris Kringle comes and drops something in.

SPEAK KINDLY in the morning; it lightens the cares of the day, and makes the household and its affairs move along more smoothly. Speak kindly at night, for it may be that before the dawn some loved one may finish his or her space of life for this world, and it will too late to ask forgiveness.—*Ex.*