

FLOWERS FOR THE DEAD.

JENNIE, did you go in to see Clara Stone to-day? asked Mrs. Case, as she and her daughter sat by the fire one evening at the close of what had been a dreary day in November.

"Dear, no," was the reply; "I forgot all about it. I met Stacy Moore down town, and she had so much to tell me about the new society the young people of their church were going to have this winter, that Clara Stone never entered my mind."

"I'm very sorry," said her mother. "You have always been such good friends. It seems too bad, now that she is unable to go out, and has been since last winter, that she should be so neglected by so-called friends."

"Now really, mother, do you think she is as badly off as she pretends?"

"Pretends!" exclaimed Mrs. Case. "Do you mean to say that you think Clara is pretending to be sick? Then I should think that one look at her sunken eyes and hollow cheeks would be answer enough."

"Well, I suppose," said Jennie, "that I ought to go in, but I never have any time."

"Why, Jennie," said her mother, "you have all there is, and you find time to attend almost every meeting of the different societies to which you belong, and I can't help but think you ought to go to see her."

A week passed by, and nothing more was said on the subject, until one evening Jennie's brother came to the sitting-room door with a paper in his hand and said, "What was Clara Stone's father's name?"

"John," said Jennie.

"Then Clara's dead," he replied.

"I don't believe it," cried Jennie. "Give me that paper." And taking the paper from his hand she read the notice of her friend's death. She looked sober, and tears filled her eyes.

After a moment's silence, she said, "It does not seem possible that it can be Clara. I should have thought they would have sent me word."

"I do not know why they should," said her mother, "you have not been to see her in

nearly two months, and every time I have been in there she has looked up with an expectant air and said, 'I surely thought Jennie would come to-day,' and I have made excuses for you. There she has lain all the long weary days, and the most of her young friends have proved themselves to be those of summer only—in fact, like the priest and the Levite, have passed by on the other side."

Jennie made no reply, but soon after said "good-night" to her mother and went to her own room. The next morning Jennie said, "I must go down to the florist's and order some flowers for Clara's funeral."

In a low tone her brother said, "Neglect for the living and flowers for the dead."

That night as Jennie sat in her room after she had seen all that was mortal of her friend Clara put from her sight forever, her mother came in and sitting down by her said, "Let this be a lesson to you, Jennie, and learn to do unto others as you would have them do to you. This is not the first time I have seen the same thing done, and by people older than you, too. They have been so intimate with others in the time of health and strength, and when they were overtaken with sickness, and not able to mingle with them in all their amusements, they have been left alone. Only those who have tried it know how monotonous life within four walls can be, especially if one is well enough to talk to friends if they would only come; and it adds to the burden of sickness, however slight, to feel that you are not necessary to your friends' happiness. Jennie, remember that 'flowers after death' will not bring smiles to cold lips, nor cheer hearts that have stopped beating; and if ever again you are tempted to neglect your friends in the time of trouble, remember this little verse:

"'Tis easy to be gentle when
Death's silence tames our clamour,
And easy to discern the best
Through memory's mystic glamour;
But wise it were for thee and me,
Ere love is past forgiving,
To take the tender lesson home—
Be kinder to the living."

—Free Church Monthly.