

not care to think much of the past. She was happy in her new home. It was a dreary place it was true. The wind moaned piteously sometimes through the trees and in winter the snow drifted high in the lanes and pathways and the wintry blasts were cold: but Alice was happy because she had found love and a home.

And so the two girls played before the house. Soon they looked up attracted by the sound of wheels.

"Oh! here is father," said Mary.

"Yes, here is father," cried Alice, for so she called him. He was, indeed, a father to her.

"And what is in that box?" asked Mary.

"Ah! what indeed?" said Mr. Gracey. "I know," cried Alice, "they are the Sunday School books."

And so they were,—a new library for the little backwoods Sunday School.

"I wish Mr. Branscombe was here now," said Mr. Gracey. And Mr. Branscombe was sent for. His house was not far away. Then they overhauled the books and got them ready for their place in the library, and Mrs. Gracey said that tea was ready, and they all sat down to a good substantial evening meal.

That night Mr. Branscombe spoke to Alice and asked her something about England. She answered him, but soon changed the subject to something more pleasant to her.

"Mr. Branscombe," she said, "Will you please tell me how you became a clergyman? because I have heard you say that it was late in life when you were ordained."

"Well, dear child," he replied, "I will tell you. I came out here to seek a home in the backwoods. I was always a devoted member of the Church of England; but I found no church here. The Methodists had their place of meeting and the Presbyterians and others also, but the Church had none. And yet there were many in the settlement who were Churchmen like myself, and one day I announced that, on the following Sunday, I would read the Church of England service in my house, and invited others to come. Several came and enjoyed it very much, and so I continued every Sunday until, at the urgent request of the Bishop I was set apart as a clergyman to minister among the people. And now you see," he continued, "we have a church and a Sunday School library."

These words were not heard by Mr. Gracey, but Alice heard them and pondered them well.

CHAPTER II.

"And I am old enough to be confirmed," said Mary.

"And so am I," said Alice,—“but oh! it is not only age that is needed, Mary,—it is the heart, which we must give to God.”

And the two girls prayed and studied and Mr. Branscombe prepared them for Confirmation. They were confirmed in the little log church in the

woods, and there, too, they knelt for their first communion.

"Oh! Alice," said Mrs. Gracey, "I wish you were stronger. You always have such a severe cough." And Mrs. Gracey thought of the cold streets of London and a poor little ragged girl standing barefooted on the cold pavement. All the after care and attention could not undo the harm that came to poor Alice's health, when she was a waif on the London streets.

"Yes, mother dear," she said, "Do what I will I can not get strong, but God's will be done."

And so the little happy family circle in the woods lived on. The love grew stronger but Alice by slow degrees grew weaker.

One day Mr. Gracey announced that he had sold the old place and had bought another farm in a better settlement but further back. It was a better settlement as far as the farming land was concerned, but not as regards the people, who were somewhat rough and untaught. And so the move was made. To the great grief of all there was no church in their new settlement. How they missed the little log church in the woods! No grand cathedral or costly minster was ever more keenly missed than it by this worthy Church family. Sometimes in cities and wealthy places there are those who do not think that the Church is missed by people in the backwoods, but they have not studied well the devotional heart of the true Churchman. He misses his church sorely when he has none to go to. The Sundays were dreary for the Graceys. They tried to go to a Methodist meeting house near by; but it was not church to them. There was no service such as was dear to them.

One day Alice came home crying. Some people had spoken roughly to her and had taunted her about the Church. "What did she mean by Church," they said, "when already there was one to go to."

But Alice in the simplicity of her heart did not call it a church. She meant that there was no service; but they laughed at her and called her "stuck up" and all that. And this made her cry. Her mother soothed her as best she could, but they were all unhappy, because they had no church, no clergyman. That night Alice said to Mr. Gracey,—

"Father, why can we not commence to have service in our own house on Sundays? I am sure you could read the prayers and we could use our little melodeon and have the chants and hymns. Oh! how lovely it would be."

Now Mr. Gracey was a good man but very quiet and diffident. He was afraid he was too nervous, but Alice coaxed him, for she remembered what Mr. Branscombe had told her about the way his own parish had commenced. At last, however, he consented, and notice was put up in the Post Office and other places that Divine service would be held in Mr. Gracey's house on Sunday morning at 11 o'clock.