

con Smily immediately crossed the room and spoke to the invalid : " Well, Martha, how do you feel to-day ? " At the first sound of the cheery voice, the sick girl's pale face lighted up, and she stretched out her hand eagerly to the visitor. " I have had one of my bad spells to-day, but I am better now, thank you." Her eyes fell on the second visitor, and deacon Smily said, " Martha, this is deacon McDonald ; you remember him, don't you ? " " O yes, very well," and with one of her brightest smiles, she held out her hand to the deacon. 'Twas a thin white hand, and somehow as his large hand closed upon it, a strange feeling came over him. Deacon McDonald had a warm corner in his heart, and that pale-faced, gentle sufferer seemed to reach it by the shortest way. The last time he had seen her she was a rosy, romping girl, and now upon her pale face there was plainly written the sufferings of the years gone by. Something like remorse, too, mingled in his thoughts. He had done nothing during all these years to help her to bear her heavy burden. He stood quietly by while Deacon Smily spoke to her comforting and tender words. He saw her eyes brighten at the sight of the ripe golden pears which the deacon had brought her, and all this time feelings which long had slumbered in Caleb McDonald's heart awoke and swelled and surged in his breast. He had a sister once, who died long, long ago ; faded away day by day until she became too frail and beautiful for earth, and took her flight for the regions of bliss. 'Twas long since he had thought of her, but now memory was fresh and vivid. As he followed deacon Smily from the sick girl's room, he brushed something like a tear from his cheek, and inwardly determined that one of the boxes of peaches in his cellar should find its way to the invalid on the morrow.

The avenue, once opened to the deacon's heart, was not quickly closed. A visit to Widow Martin determined him to send her a load of wood. As he followed deacon Smily from one scene of suffering to another, and marked the glow of sunshine this good man's presence cast over the most dismal scenes, an enthusiasm began to kindle in his breast. The tiny spark of Christianity, which had been almost smothered by worldliness, now began to brighten into a ruddy blaze ; the slumberer was awakening.