

ly there at uncle's, so lonely at church, so lonely and so frozen everywhere!"

"Ah!" A quick little change passes over his face. Young people exactly like this girl, in some respects, have come into Pastor Nelson's own church.

"So lonely," did you say—and at church? Now, my child, I know the people here not to be ogress. It makes me somewhat curious as to how you have met the advances of those with whom you have been brought in contact—I must, I believe, inquire of you."

He pauses, but receives no reply. "Have you really met them half-way? shown a pleasant willingness to be acquainted?"

Another silence. Lois is thinking of her up-and-down refusals to see Anna Francis and Caddie Greenough, and to attend the church socials.

"Have you ever inquired of any one what work the church was doing? and whether there was any place in the ranks for a stranger who loved to work?"

Silence still. "Have you ever sought to remind Dr. Guthrie of your existence? There are many methods, my dear, quite legitimate, of finding your own way into Sunday-school work, and Bible classes, and conference meetings, and projects of charity, and thus making yourself known—known as one who loves the Master's work. Have you not rather shrunk away, shrunk into corners, glided off by yourself whenever it was possible? yes, and then moaned drearily when you got by yourself, because you were so lonely and unnoticed? You never have once thought, have you now, that the stranger has a duty as well as the people who goes among?"

No, she never had. For the moment she is freshly overwhelmed. But, suddenly, she looks up at Pastor Nelson half pathetically, half searchingly.

"But if it is I who am to blame, wholly I—why was last Sabbath at your church such a happy season for me? Every one of your people seemed near to me, and I never shall forget them—I was not lonely there."

Pastor Nelson smiles, and yet he could find it in his heart to wish she had not asked this question—not in this connection, at least. He cannot answer how, over, save in truth.

"Sister Lois, I have trained my church—I train all my churches to be 'not forgetful to entertain strangers.' Perhaps it is a specialty of mine. But just as warm hearts are in all churches—believe me. I know that there are many in Dr. Guthrie's church."

Lois rises to go—she knows how the case has been decided, what sentence has been pronounced.

As Pastor Nelson shakes hands with her he says, "Sister, I would reflect carefully, before I took any decisive step. I would thoroughly satisfy myself what the post where God has stationed me would prove, provided I did its duties."

CHAPTER XII.

THE DUTY AT HAND.

Absorbed by perplexing thoughts, Lois goes unattentively along the streets. Looking up, at last, she finds herself only a square from home. She is not quite ready for home; she hesitates, then turns into an opposite street. She walks and walks, thinks and thinks.

She is recalled to herself by the familiar aspect of the house she is at that moment passing—a low, large, leafy sort of white house, all vines and blinds and veranda. Yes,—she has taken a circle and come around back to the c. zy Nelson parsonage.

"Ought I not to do it?" she murmurs, after the moment's surprise. "Ought I not to accept this as a sign?"

And now there is no indecision in her air. She walks rapidly around the house and rings. This time a little girl opens the door. She has Pastor Nelson's own great grave black eyes—they are quite as striking as her father's, set in such a child-like face.

"I wish to see your papa," Lois says to her, smiling.

"Why, you just saw papa a moment ago!" says the self-possessed little dot, but admits her all the same.

"I have come back," Lois says as he opens the study door, at her knock, "and, Pastor Nelson, I want to stay!"

Pastor Nelson is naturally somewhat astonished; but Lois hurries on. "I can see what I need—why may I not come into your church? Among your people I felt as if I had suddenly arrived home, as if I were sitting down before a warm Thanksgiving fireside. I know if I could attend your church every Sabbath I should get the strength to do, and to be all you have pointed out. I know that if I could only get once thawed out, and well rested, and safe back into my old ways of thinking and feeling, I could go on nobly and worthily."

Lois' looks are beseeching, her tones pleading. A warm, cloudy moisture gathers in the eyes of the warm-hearted shepherd of the warm-hearted flock.

He motions her to a seat. He quietly rearranges the books on his table before he answers.

"Sister, do you not see that you are putting your trust in us instead of God—that this is only another way of creeping from your post? Should I bid you come now, you would always feel a sudden chill whenever you thought of your own church. There would inevitably be a cold spot left in your heart. Sister, that cold spot would widen out, and I believe you would 'freeze' again. It would end, I fear, in making you a bitter and sectarian kind of Christian. God forbid I should have a hand in any such thing! No, my child, go home, and bravely take up the duty nearest at hand, glorify service with the spirit in which you perform it, and I truly believe you will find that duty the door-way into a land of sunshine and of peace."

His words are final. Lois does not reply. She goes out in silence—but even as she went before—she up face to face with her own personal duties—those old hard undone duties at Mrs. John Hurd's.

It is now fast growing night. But she walks as slowly as before, and feels so hopeless, so utterly unequal to the work of making herself seem to those around her what Pastor Nelson expects. All at once she catches herself by the arm in a passion of self-accusing. "Seem! Seem! Oh! Father," she whispers with a sob, "help me to truly be what I would seem!"

She has come to the corner of Gramercy Square again, but she still feels like turning aside to gain time and strength. She looks up at the stately house with dreamy eyes, as she thinks of entering it all bereft of her brave plan. It is her lot, she wearily feels, to be of the St. Paul class of Christians—a runner of a race, a wrestler for a prize, a soldier of the good fight. Her tired heart reverts longingly to more restful smiles, to the peaceful summer imagery of a happier kind of religion,—the sheep of the shepherd, the branches of the vine. Oh! to feed in the green pastures, to stray beside still waters, to grow heavenward in the beauty and peace of a sunny, prayerful, meditative daily life!

It is a long time that the little plain gray girl goes up and down the stately Square, trying to just once say, "Thy will, Thy will."

She turns toward the house, finally, and at the very last there is a sigh instead of a smile, and the step is, oh, how weary.

Coming from the opposite direction, she meets her uncle at the gate. He opens it for her. From a new impulse she wants to walk with him as if—well, as if she were one of the family.

"Been making calls, eh?"

"Yes, uncle, one."

"That's right," he says with a short laugh.

His manner immediately strikes her. She looks at him. His rosy face is rosier than ever, but the expression is unnatural.

"Are you not well, uncle?"

"Oh, I'm all right, and so are you, my girl, and I'm glad to see it," he replies. "When everything goes crash and smash, it's pleasant to see that the butterflies are flying as usual—it really quite consoles a man to find that the butterflies are all right."

The portly Mr. John Hurd makes a little stiff obeisance toward her, and then toward the lighted windows of the drawing-room.

Lois is startled. She instinctively detains him at the door. The hat lifted for that singular bow has disclosed his forehead white and wet with sweat and corrugated with pain. She lays her hand up on his arm. "Uncle, what is the matter? What did you mean by crash and smash?"

He looks down at her with an odd imitation of her anxious air, and then merrily cries out, "The little butterfly wants to know what I mean!"

Lois is thoroughly alarmed. She keeps her hand on his arm—but he seems quite willing to stand there on the gravel and talk as long as she chooses—he is, in fact, very unlike her uncle. Within she hears the drawing-room door open, the gay tinkling of the piano dies away, the soft sound of many footsteps is in the hall, the soft gay confusion of voices—there is company, and they are just going out to dinner. She has an intuition that, admitted to this gay scene, her uncle's strange mood might burst forth into madness.

"Uncle John," she says quietly, "you look tired, so am I. I wish that we might have a quiet tea by ourselves."

A softened, byish sort of look steals over his face. "The very thing," he says, "then we could talk it over."

"Come, then," she says lightly, but, inwardly, she is frightened at the responsibility she assumes. With her hand still on his arm, they go around through the twilight to a distant side door, and she ushers him into a little retired sitting-room that the servants use sometimes. Oh! she trembles, you may believe. But Mr. Hurd steps along briskly, his hand in the breast of his overcoat, and, leaning towards her, he talks in a low, confidential business tone.

"The trouble, you see, my girl, is, that the banks are panic struck, all of them, and have agreed to make no loans even to regular customers. No paper, save an actual draft, will bring a cent. And every confounded dollar I owe comes due this month—Sheldon holds the whole, I find, and, what's worse! he has no more consideration for an honorable old name than he has for a shoddy upstart, since he has found that I am in a tight place, and that holding half gives him the chance to sweep the whole! it's all got to go, my girl! Well, well! But how comes it about that you are not as fine as the others? where's your flounces and feathers?" Her uncle stops by the great chair she has drawn for him, and fixes his eyes upon her.

"Oh, I'm not a butterfly," little Lois says lightly. "I'm a quiet, clerical little person interested in business and money matters. I'll order tea here by ourselves, and you shall tell me all about it."

She rattles the coals into a cheerful blaze, runs up the back stairs for his slipper, and then down into the kitchen to say a few low words to the trusty Hannah—all in a strange dream, where the strangest part seems that she should feel so strong, and brave, and determined.

Hannah brings up the supper. When it is ready Lois approaches her uncle who has for the last few minutes sat silent. He is dosing, but she rouses him, and he draws up to the table at her suggestion. But, presently, she is aware that he wonderingly looks around the room and at her.

"Bless me! I thought Sheldon was to be here—but he has eluded me all day! He picks up knife and fork, as at a restaurant, without preliminary of grace, or any courtesy toward herself.

Lois sits, silent, opposite. She begins to suspect the truth. She feels fresh alarm. Her habit is to glance over the

dishes, and she has, of course, noticed the dining headings, "Suspension of Claws! Failure of Jay Cooke & Co.! Suspension of the Spragues—Fish, Hatch & Co., &c."

As the silent meal draws to a close, she queries what she ought next to do. Before she has decided she sees that Mr. Hurd, knife and fork still in hand, has fallen asleep. His head drops heavily forward upon his breast, his breathing is long and heavy.

Lois stands over him altogether irresolute. Pleasant sounds from the distant dining room reach her as a door opens and shuts. She knows how smiling and how bland her fair aunt is looking at this very moment, she fancies merry, graceful Sadee, and the beautiful Elizabeth—how like a lightning stroke from out the blue noon-day sky would her news fall upon them! She has already settled that that is ruin and poverty. She feels she ought to screen them, if she can, from careless eyes in their first hour of terror and helplessness; feels instinctively that the news ought not to be spread; feels, too, that for her uncle's own personal safety everything like alarm and excitement ought to be avoided.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The World's Telegraphs.

Canada has been represented to be a "slow going" country. We don't believe it. In the matter of great internal improvements, she stands first among the countries of the world, regard being had to population. In railways she has gone ahead with wonderful rapidity, and in canals she is not wanting, and in telegraphic lines she is as prominent as she is in railways. A recent report of the Public Works Department points out that our telegraphic accommodation is greater than either that of the United States or any European country. The number of offices in Canada is 2,253, or 1 to 1,314 of population, as based on the census of 1881. In the Scientific American it is stated that the number of American telegraph offices in 1882 was 12,317, and the number of telegrams forwarded during the year was 40,681,177. The number of telegraph offices in Great Britain and Ireland in 1882 was 5,747, the number of telegrams forwarded being 52,965,029. Germany has 10,803 offices, the number of telegrams forwarded being 26,260,124. Russia had 2,819, the number of telegrams forwarded being 9,800,231. Belgium had 855 offices, the number of telegrams forwarded being 4,666,843. Spain had 647 offices, the number of telegrams forwarded being 2,830,186. Prussia had 1,025 offices, the number of telegrams forwarded being 2,032,005. Switzerland had 1,160 offices, Italy 2,590, and Austria 2,606. The number of telegrams forwarded in the last three countries mentioned was 3,940,182, 7,026,387, and 6,626,263, respectively. It will be seen by these figures, having regard to population, that Canada stands A No. 1, while she stands only third or fourth among the nations in the absolute magnitude of her commerce. To say, under these circumstances, that Canada is a "slow-going" country, is to pronounce upon her an unimagined lie.—[Brantford Telegraph, Oct. 31.]

The wages of a gang of Italian laborers near Saratoga was recently cut down 10 cents a day. Instead of striking they cut an inch of their shirt blades at night. The boss asked what it meant, and one of the men replied, "Not so much pay, not so much dirt left, all right, job last the more long; Italian no fool, he no strike."

Little Nellie. "We had a lovely time at the seashore this summer. Where did you go?" Little Jack. "We stood in the city." Little Nellie. "Did you? How awful it is to be poor. We used to stay in the city, but we go to the seashore every year now." Little Jack. "Well, we're going next summer. My pa is going to fall, too."