

A PAGE FROM KITTY HURLSTON'S LIFE.

By Mrs. Ellen Ross.

CHAPTER I.
THE MOTHER'S REQUEST.

Mrs. Hurlston's birthday fell on one of the fairest days in June. Her loving children cheered her by their little gifts, as usual, but she felt that there was more of tenderness infused into their manner to day than ever before, for she was now a widow, her husband having died in the preceding winter.

The story of her married life had been a very sad one; her husband had fallen into drinking habits, and although repentance and complete reformation took place before the close of his life still his wife and family could think of his past only with sorrow and regret.

With the numerous birthday greetings which the post brought Mrs. Hurlston on this particular morning—for she was widely and tenderly beloved—a beautiful card came from her sister-in-law in London, with a kind letter containing a pressing invitation to her daughter Katharine to spend a few weeks with them some time that year. Katharine had never yet been to London; she had been somewhat overlooked by relatives sending invitations; and although now fourteen years of age, she was so gay and giddy in her ways, that everybody regarded her as more of a child than she really was. Happy and light-hearted in spite of the family troubles, which had never really come home to her, Katharine was playful and gay as a kitten, and indeed was always called Kitty, her full name being considered far too dignified for her.

She was wild with delight at the very mention of going from her obscure Yorkshire home to the grand metropolis, of which she had heard so much and formed such extravagant ideas; and all through the breakfast-time her mind was full of the thought, *How soon could she go!* What new dresses should she have! How long would she be allowed to stay! These were some of the questions which she eagerly asked.

"Our plans are prepared for these holidays," replied her mother, placidly, "so you will have to wait till Christmas, Kitty."

"Oh, well, I don't mind," said Kitty; "I shall have it to look forward to all that time, and there's pleasure in that. And Christmas will be just the best time to go; cousins will be so gay with their parties and dances and going about. It will be delightful!"

"I daresay you will soon get tired of it, as I did," said her sister Emily, a gentle girl of sixteen. "I know I was very glad to get back to our quiet home, after spending a Christmas there."

"That's because you're such a humdrum little soul," answered Kitty, playfully. "I like gay things."

"You are younger," replied Emily, with a dignity that scarcely suited her age, and which only provoked a merry laugh from Kitty who exclaimed—

"How motherly we are when we find ourselves sixteen years of age!"

The boys, Frank and Harry, laughed at this, and breakfast being now over they rose to go out to business. They were steady, thoughtful lads of seventeen and nineteen years respectively, and were a great comfort and respect to their widowed mother.

"There is just one little favor I want to ask you on my birthday, children, before you go out," she said. "I have a little book here in which I wish to keep your autographs, but I want them under certain conditions. You know this is the first birthday I have ever spent as a widow. You know, also, quite well what my past life has been; had it not been for strong drink I might now be a happy, contented wife, instead of a sorrowing widow, and you, children, might have had a wise and noble father to guide you through your early years; for he was wise and noble until he fell through the subtle and deceitful influence of drink, which I was unwary enough to cherish as a friend in our home in my early years. Since it showed itself to me in its true and deadly character, it has been completely banished from our home, and you, children, have not been exposed to temptation; and I quite believe that you are loyal enough to me to abstain from it ~~everywhere~~ here, and at all times, if I expressly wished you to do so. Well, you know I do wish that most

earnestly, but I want more than that. Now I have myself drawn up in this pretty little book a pledge form, which I want you all to sign for me; and I shall indeed prize your autographs under these circumstances. Although I could trust to your honor to keep the promise given merely by word of mouth, still it will be a sort of help and safeguard to you, as you go out into society and meet with temptation, to say, 'I am a pledged abstainer.' But better still, it will help those sunk in the slough of intemperance to rise and stand upon their feet if you can say to them, 'Come sign the temperance pledge, as I have done.'"

"I am quite ready, mother," said Frank, rising to get pen and ink. And the mother watched her boys with eyes moist with pleasure as they wrote their names in her little book. Without a word, but with her heart's full consent, Emily then wrote hers; but when it came to Kitty, she said—

"Mamma dear, I won't write mine to-day. I can't do it with all my heart, and I fancy I might some time regret it if I signed now. Let me wait till your next birthday; I shall not be as old as Emily even then."

"Very well, Kitty," said her mother, with a little sadness in her voice, "I would not force you on any account; but remember, I may have no next birthday. We cannot calculate upon a single year, or a single week of our lives; and when my time comes, I should die happier if my children had all given me this solemn promise for their dear father's sake, as well as their own."

"Oh, don't talk about dying, mamma dear!" exclaimed Kitty. "It makes me feel quite gloomy; and you are young yet. The fact is, mamma, I would like to get that London visit over before I sign. There are none of these abstainers up there, and I confess I am not brave enough to be laughed at, at their parties, because I won't take a sip of wine with them."

"I am sorry to hear it, though it is a candid confession, Kitty," said her mother. "But I would like you to have a little more backbone, and not mind being sneered at for doing what is right. 'The fear of man bringeth a snare.'"

"Oh, the backbone will grow when I'm a little older," said Kitty, playfully. "At present I am young and giddy!"

"At which they all laughed; and Kitty was so irresistible."

The youngest girl, Ethel, having given her mother a coaxing caress, and whispered the request to her, was here allowed to inscribe her name in large, ill-formed letters, which pleased her greatly; and four-year-old Bertie was permitted to put "his mark" after Frank had written his name.

The little ceremony was over now and Mrs. Hurlston closed her book with a sigh, which no one observed but Kitty. It went to her heart, and in after years she remembered it bitterly.

"I'm a great coward, mamma," she said, when the others had left the room. "I might at least do this to please you, without my own full consent; but I know you don't wish that sort of signing."

"I don't Kitty; but I will believe that you will some day do it with all your heart."

"Thank you, dear mamma," said Kitty, affectionately kissing her.

CHAPTER II.

KITTY'S BITTER REGRET.

The Christmas holidays came, and Kitty was transported to London in charge of a friend who was going at the same time. She left home in the wildest spirits, with two or three new dresses in her box, and everything arranged to her heart's content. All the others were at home as companions to her mother, whom she left in her usual health; and circumstances were so favorable to enjoyment that they seemed to say to her, "Take this ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

The gay London cousins were delighted with Kitty, who seemed fully as fond of pleasure as themselves, and they indulged in quite a round of innocent dissipation. Kitty never made a stand against anything that was proposed, but entered heartily into everything. She sipped her wine at parties like the rest, seeing which, one of her cousins said warmly, "I am so glad you are not a strict-laced abstainer, Kitty. I always feel uncomfortable in the presence of teetotalers; they seem to be looking at you as

if you were a criminal for taking a glass of wine! Now, Cousin Emily, when she was here, made me quite savage. Not a drop would she touch, though she admitted she had never taken a pledge. She just refused, as she said, 'to please mamma.' Well, I wonder why that should please her?"

The words smote giddy Kitty like a blow. "You perhaps don't know everything about mamma," she replied, softly; and then she changed the conversation, and in a few minutes was as gay as ever again.

The next day, which was in the last week of the old year, they had arranged to go to Hampton Court, and from thence a round-about way home. Kitty's uncle, Mr. Osgood, was to take charge of the party, but Mrs. Osgood was to remain at home with the two youngest of her children.

It was a bright, frosty morning when they set out, as merry a party as the winter sun shone on that day. Kitty, wrapped up in furs, and dressed in colors for the first time since her father's death, looked a picture of health and happiness. None could have guessed that even at that moment a swift-winged messenger was preparing to send her sorrowful tidings, which should change her life, hitherto so gay and careless into sorer sadness, mingled with vain regrets.

Soon after noon a telegram came for her to Mrs. Osgood's house. She opened it, lest it should require an answer, and was startled and shocked to read, "Return at once. Mother died very suddenly this morning, ill only two days. Uncle, please come, if possible."

Mrs. Osgood at once sent a messenger off to Hampton Court to look for the party; but he returned alone during the afternoon, saying that the party had left before he arrived there. Poor Mrs. Osgood had then to endure her suspense until late in the evening, when the noisy and merry party returned between nine and ten o'clock.

She drew her husband into the breakfast-room without being observed, and broke the news to him. He was painfully startled and distressed, yet quite able to think calmly what ought to be done. He could not possibly leave without going to his office first thing in the morning to set business straight for his clerks; otherwise he and Kitty might have travelled all night to get to Yorkshire in the morning. But the advantage would not be great; and it would certainly be damaging to Kitty to tell her this, and rob her of her rest after a hard day's pleasure.

"She is only a child, let her get her sleep," said Mrs. Osgood's motherly heart.

So Mr. Osgood went out quickly to telegraph to Yorkshire, and the young people were allowed to be merry and go to bed as usual, though it sorely smote Mrs. Osgood's heart to listen to their merriment; and they did not even observe that she was quiet and absent-minded.

Kitty never afterwards quite remembered how she got through the next day. It seemed all like a dreadful dream to her—the sudden failure attempt to realize that she was motherless, the packing up of her pretty things into her box, which seemed somehow like shutting up all her past happy life out of sight and out of mind. Then came the dull, long railway journey through the frosty, leafless country, the train seeming to creep along at a snail's pace; and, finally the arrival at the little quiet home, once so bright and cheerful now dim and shrouded, with silent, weeping mourners going up and down. It seemed more than she could bear. Her grief choked her, and it was grief with a touch of bitterness, in it which her brothers and sister did not feel.

They had done all they could to please and gratify their dear mother; she alone had withstood her wishes in order to gratify others and her own weakness and self-love. Oh, what would she not now have given to be able to grant the stilled heart the gratification it desired! "Oh, Emily," she sobbed, "if dear mamma had ever wished me to do such an absurd and impossible thing as to crawl on my hands and knees from here to London, I should have done it to please her, while I had her alive and well! But she never wished us to do a thing but what was for our good. Oh, why did I object to please her in anything? Why did I refuse to grant any request, or strive to please myself or others before her? I can never, never forgive myself!"

When her sobbing had somewhat ceased, she said, "Let me go and see mamma, Emily. I cannot believe she is dead! How ever was it?"

"It was a swift inflammation," replied Emily, tearfully. "Almost before we could realize that she was in danger, she was gone!"

On the lighted landing there were candles, one of which Emily lit, and taking poor Kitty's hand, tenderly drew her into their mother's room. She lay in death's calm repose, with the choicest of their little conservatory flowers about her hands and breast, beyond the reach of pain and sorrow, disappointment and regret. Kitty stood with clasped hands and streaming eyes gazing at the still form which had no word or sign of greeting for her.

"Mother," she said, brokenly, "here I give you the promise which you asked of me on your birthday, and I refused. I promise never again to touch anything in the way of intoxicating drink, which killed my dear father, and embittered your life. Perhaps you can hear my vow in heaven; but if not, your God can, and in His name I make it!"

Emily pressed her hand, and allowed her to stand and sob her grief away. Then she said, "Come now, dear Kitty, I think we have learned this lesson: If we will not do what is right in the sunshine, God will most likely, in His faithful love and tenderness, make us do it in the storm and darkness of sorrow and affliction."

"To-day if ye will hear His voice"—to do whatever Duty and Right demand of you—"harden not your hearts."—*Band of Hope Review.*

MINNIE AND HER KITTY "ROSY."

BY REV. E. P. HAMMOND.

MAHOMETI, White Bear Lake, Minn.

While on my way to the shores of this beautiful lake, we spent a Sabbath at Chicago. I there fell in with an old friend, who related to me the following touching incident:

He was riding one day on the railway; a lady came in at a station, accompanied by her little daughter, aged about seven years who took the seat directly in front of him.

The little girl held carefully in her hand a basket, into which, after lifting the cover carefully, she occasionally peeped. This was done with a smiling face and a cheerful word, as if she recognized a friend inside. My friend stretched his neck and looked over the back of the seat, wondering what the little girl had in the basket. He also peered through the open lid. He asked, "What have you there, my little girl?"

"Oh, this is my little kitty."

"What will you take for your kitty?"

"Oh, I would not sell kitty for anything."

"I will give you a dollar for your kitty."

"No, I will not sell kitty for any money you can give me."

"What is your name?" asked my friend.

"My name is Minnie and my kitty's name is Rosy."

"Do you go to Sunday-school, Minnie?"

"Oh, yes, indeed."

"Do you love Jesus, Minnie?"

"Yes, indeed, I do."

She then looked my friend full in the face and asked, "Do you love Jesus, sir?"

"Certainly I do. I have loved him and worked for him many a year."

Little Minnie looked down thoughtfully for a few moments. Suddenly she lifted her basket over the back of her seat and said, "You may have Rosy for nothing, because you love Jesus."

You see, little Minnie was a Christian; and though she loved her "Rosy," she loved Jesus and his friends far more, and when she saw my friend loved the Saviour, her heart went out in love to him. She was willing to make a great sacrifice to give him pleasure.

Do you, my little reader, love Jesus? Do you love His people. I can tell you that Jesus has died on the cross, in your place, that you might be saved.

Oh, come, then, to Jesus and give Him your heart and get your sins forgiven, and you will then love Him and love His people as little Minnie did.

I have found some men and women away here in the North-west, near St. Paul, who, when I was here twenty years ago, gave their hearts to Christ, and they have never been sorry for it.