

Robbing a Methodist.

BY MRS. A. M. GRIFFIN.

One wintry eve a hungry pair
Crouched by their empty grate,
Who had by sin and sloth been brought
To sad, despairing state,
Fierce poacher Jim loud cursed his
"luck,"
His wife's vain, thriftless ways,
Sal, not behind, with shrewish tongue
Bemoaned his drunken days.
Then, tired of empty throats and 'plaints,
They, silent, sulked again,
Until a cruel and crafty thought
Filled Sal's more active brain.
Said she, "That pious lot next door,
They eat and drink at ease,
They've food and fire, ay, 'nough to spare,
Why should us starve and freeze?
'Tis meetin' night, they'll both be out,
So in I'll step, and see
What victuals they have left about,
A feast for you and me!"
"Ah! Ha!" scoffed Jim, "'twill be good
fun,
I hate their whining ways;
Their talk that all things 'work their
good,'
That they for all can praise.
We'll give 'em work to-night to 'Praise,'
A trial worth the name;
They're too well off, just look at us!
It is a thundering shame!
But, stay," said Jim, "before we're off,
Suppose they should come in,
And find you at your lively tricks?
They'd raise an awful din."
"Nay," cried his wife, in scornful tone,
"Why, that'll be all right;
They're Methodists, and, don't you know,
That Methodists won't fight?"

Sal starts—the lock is easy forced,
She gropes her way inside;
A tempting meal is neatly spread,
Close to the bright fireside.
With eager hands Sal quickly fills
Her apron with the prize,
Then turns to go, but, lo! she meets
Her neighbour's puzzled eyes.
Uneasy, though she knew not why,
The careful dame had turned,
Nor stayed to see the meeting end,
Lest home was robbed or burned.
She now perceived God's guiding hand,
Had led her footsteps there,
And calmly she the silence broke,
"Let's have a word of prayer."
Then, kneeling down, she humbly craved
God's blessing for the thief,
A sense of sin—a broken heart—
The way to find relief.
Sal trembling stood, then one by one
She on the table laid
The pilfered goods, then faint would fly,
But still her steps delayed.
The "Methodist" with kindly words,
Now sought her heart to win,
And begged her from that hour to shun
The bitter paths of sin.
Upon her now repentant guest
She pressed an ample store,
Sal wept, and vowed in heartfelt words
That she would steal no more.
Sal told her tale, such Christlike deed
Jim's hardened heart touched too,
And earnestly the sinful pair
Began their life anew.
Helped by their pious neighbours' prayers,
They learned their sins forgiven,
Found honest work, and henceforth trod
The upward way to heaven.

A BOY OF TO-DAY

BY

Julia MacNair Wright.

Author of "The House on the Bluff," etc.

CHAPTER XIX.—Continued.

"I shall have the house painted and the rooms papered," he said, for he was so happy he could talk only of the beautiful home-coming; it was to shine in his life like the "Glorious Return" of the Vaudois, "if it be lawful to compare small things to great." He said, "I'm joy crazy."
"I'm wild," said Dolly, "to know how your Uncle 'Rias will go on."
"If he is more frantic than he was at Mr. Fletcher's, the day I was taken partner," said Heman, "I hope you'll not leave any breakable things about."
"Come, Dolly, and Heman!" called Mrs. Clump, "there's friends in the sitting-room." It was a pleasant evening with the dear old faithful friends, but for the first time in his life Heman, who was of a distinctly social nature, found himself wishing that the guests would go away. He wondered if it would be right to tell the family his news that evening, and if joyful excitement might not harm Aunt Espey by keeping her from sleeping. However, he could not

withhold such splendid news. Scarcely had Mrs. Clump closed the front door behind the last of the friends, when Heman began seating his family and the Clumps, and demanding attention to a very big piece of business.

"Got a big contract, Heman?" cried Uncle 'Rias, all eagerness; "going to build a new church, or a court-house, or have you been figuring on plans for the new School for the Blind down south part of the State?"

"Better than that, better than that!" cried Heman, "we've got back the Sinner farm! Yes, sir! By to-morrow this time we can own it out and out, every foot and timber of it—that is, if Aunt Espey says so; and you want to come back, don't you, Aunt Espey?"

"Oh, yes, Heman, if it's only for me to say. It's many a day since I earned a dollar," replied Aunt Espey.

"But it seems you own the worth of a many dollars. The railroad company wants to buy your place where we live to put up a shop, and they offer twenty-five hundred dollars cash down to-morrow noon. If we'll take the offer. It is a good fair offer, and I suppose, Aunt Espey, you'll take it?"

"Why, certainly, if you and 'Rias and Mr. Fletcher say so. Isn't it beautiful of the Lord to make a poor, old, helpless woman like me the means of getting back the home! Why, the longer I live the more entirely good God is to me! You are all so kind and loving, and I'm so comfortable, that 'pears like he wants to make me realize what heaven is before I get there. Well, Mrs. Clump, we will all be glad to live neighbours again. There's a deal in being neighbours. It says in Scripture, 'Better is a friend that is near than a brother far off.' Well, yes, I am pleased."

"Of course we'll talk with Lawyer Brace and Mr. Fletcher early to-morrow morning; they're solid business men, and Mr. Brace knows how things ought to be done. We have one thousand laid up; the place will cost twenty-eight hundred; if we put five hundred to your railroad money, Aunt Espey, the place can be bought, and we'll have funds for repairs, stock, and tools," rattled on Heman.

"Hasn't that boy come to have a good business head?" cried Uncle 'Rias, in great admiration. He had pounded with his "patent leg" until he was tired.

"I have business head enough, Uncle 'Rias, to see that when the place is bought it will belong to Aunt Espey."

"What, me!" cried Aunt Espey. "Why, I don't care a mite about that; you people would always take care of me, and I haven't long to live any way. Why, I'm past eighty."

"I hope I'll see you past a hundred," cried Heman. "Folks like you, Aunt Espey, make the world better just by living in it. Whether you care about it or not, the place will be yours, and held entirely by you."

"But there's that other five hundred," said Aunt Espey, who still had the Sinner business instincts.

"My opinion," struck in Mr. Clump, "is that the place is Aunt Espey's, Aunt D'rexy holding one-sixth interest in it. That's the way to arrange all that."

"I shall make a will to-morrow," said Aunt Espey, "and will it all to—well, Heman, you can have it; you've been the best kind of a boy to us always and you would never let any of your folks come to want, I know."

"Hold on," said Mr. Clump, "I heard Mr. Reynolds say once that justice was better than sentiment, and legal rights than anybody's bounty. Aunt Espey, it's all fair to will the place to Heman, but you ought to will a home-right in it so long as they live to 'Rias and D'rexy."

"Oh, I see," said 'Rias, "you all want to fix it so I can't speculate myself out of a home again. Well, maybe I've got cured of that idea. I hope, after all my experiences, I am better than a washed pig."

"You're all right, Uncle 'Rias," said Heman heartily, and Aunt D'rexy reached over and patted her husband's work-hardened hands. Friend Clump had been troubled with doubts enough about Urias' condition to interpose his suggestions, but now he wanted to get all affairs on a kindly neighbourly footing.

"It's awful late," he said, "nigh about ten o'clock, but we feel like talking. 'Rias, I've a plan in my mind I'd like you to think about. You always had plenty of work in this neighbourhood, and people build and repair more rather than less. There's now doing over at the 'Inlet too. Fletcher and Leslie are likely to sweep the town. I s'pose, seeing they're all so smart; but my plan is for you and Joey to set up your shop out here. You can put up a shop right on the main road, on the corner of your old potato field. Wouldn't cost much; the three

of you would make light work of it, and it would be much easier on you, 'Rias, than trying to go to town every day."

"That's sense," said Uncle Urias, "and I believe it is just the thing I'll do; hey, Joey?"

The news of the good fortune of the Sinner spread among their friends, and many hospitable doors were open to them during the time the family in possession of the farm were preparing to move and the repairs were being made. It did not take many days to pack up the goods in the four living rooms, and the shop at the little home of the past seven or eight years. Happer, who under five years of Heman's tutelage had become entirely reformed, left the factory for three days and came to help his friends. Aunt D'rexy found great comfort in his work. He did it so exactly as she wanted to have it done, and it is a comfort to have one's way even if it is not the best way that ever was heard of.

Happer provided long boxes and took up Aunt D'rexy's shrubs and plants with plenty of earth, so that, as Aunt D'rexy said, "they made the change from the village to the farm and never knew they had been moved." As they worked at moving the plants or packing, Happer and Aunt D'rexy found plenty to talk about. Happer had joined a building association, and a little four-roomed house was just finished for him. He had made his garden with plenty of "seeds, slips, and sets," from Aunt D'rexy's premises, and now he had his share of the currant bushes, fruit trees, grapevines, honeysuckles, and various other plants that were making way for railroad shops.

"I've laid up enough to get the rooms furnished, Mrs. Sinner, if you'll go with me these two evenings to buy. I expect to have all set up and a fire in the stove when my sister gets here. Poor girl, she is wild with joy to think we're to live together and have a home. She's been saving money and making things ever since I talked about it two years ago. We'll be real comfortable, and she sha'n't slave any more as she's had to do, poor thing."

"It was a blessed happening when those boys found me in front of the 'Last Chance,' and that Heman was willing to stick to me when I was in my tantrums and make me behave. Many's the time I felt so mad that I could kill him when he put his strength against mine and forced me to keep sober. Now I feel that he has saved my soul from death. I'd have been in the penitentiary or in a drunkard's grave, I reckon, if it hadn't been for you all. I'm going to bring my sister to the farm. I want her to know how good you all are."

Thus Happer and Aunt D'rexy kept tongues and hands at work, Aunt D'rexy full of happiness, replying,

"Well, now, Happer, I don't mind telling you that I used to feel as if nothing could make me so happy as to have my Heman a minister, seems like then he could serve God sure enough; but I've learned that in every business that's fair and honest and lawful, a man can do good and serve God and help other men. You ain't the only one Heman's helped, though he don't talk much about it. He may brag about his strength, but not about things like that."

"I wish there were half a dozen fellows of that kind in every factory and shop and mill and mine through the whole country," said Happer heartily.

Finally the procession started for the Sinner Farm. It was like the journey of Jacob, with family, goods, and chattels, going down into Egypt, only the Sinner had less people and fewer impediments. Heman had bought Lawyer Brace's surrey out of his first firm earnings, and in it at the head of the line of march, amazed at their own magnificence, rode Aunt Espey and Aunt D'rexy and Uncle 'Rias, with the clock, the family Bible, two pots of begonias, and a tin box of eatables. Joey and Heman followed, each driving a waggon loaded with goods.

Happer had borrowed a spring-waggon and came along with the plants, three lads of the neighbourhood drove the cow, which moved majestically along in the appointed path, and two pigs who erred vehemently in their ways, and gave the young drovers no end of trouble with their vagaries. There was a very lively clucking, screaming, crowing, from several coops of fowls perched on the waggon-loads; and much distracted peeping of young chicks in baskets carried on the knees of the drivers. Aunt D'rexy had secret fears about her sewing-machine, and Aunt Espey hoped that neither moths nor mice had harmed the goods so long stored at Mrs. Clump's house.

As the returned exiles came into the dear old neighbourhood, at doors and

windows appeared kindly faces, white aprons, sun-tonnets, hats, and kerchiefs, were vigorously waved.

"Dear me! Isn't everybody good to us," cried Aunt Espey.

"I could tell you several ditties about that," said Uncle 'Rias, "and I mind some remarks D'rexy's uncle, the deacon, made once in prayer-meeting on the text about 'the measure you mete shall be measured to you again, and you and Aunt D'rexy certainly have been good to folks. Why, if that Heman hadn't drove through the West Lane and got to the house first! Unloading all by himself, too! D'rexy, do you mind what a bit of a boy he was when he first came to us, and now our Heman's grown up into a man!"

The End.

THAT BABY.

There was a baby in the railway car the other day. It was not an unusual child, but it had a decidedly bright face and pretty ways. For the first few miles she was very quiet, and her blue eyes looked around in wonderment, for evidently it was the little one's first ride on the cars. Then, as she became used to the roar and rumble, the baby proclivities asserted themselves, and she began to play with her father's moustache. At first the father and mother were the only parties interested, but soon a young lady in an adjacent seat nudged her escort and directed his attention to the laughing child. He looked up, remarked that it was a pretty baby and tried to look unconcerned; but it was noticed that his eyes wandered back to the spot occupied by the happy family, and he commenced to smile. The baby pulled the hair of an old lady in front, who turned around savagely and glared at the father with a look that plainly said, "Nuisance should be left at home." But she caught sight of the laughing eyes of the baby, and when she turned back she seemed pleased about something. Several other had become interested in the child by this time—business men and young clerks, old ladies and girls—and when the baby hands grasped the large silk hat of her father and placed it on her own head, it made such a comical picture that an old gentleman across the way, unable to restrain himself, burst out into a loud guffaw, and then looked sheepishly out the window, as if ashamed to be caught doing such an unmanly thing. Before another five minutes he was playing peek-a-boo across the aisle with the baby, and every one was envying him.

The ubiquitous young man, ever on the move, passed through, and was at a loss to account for the frowns of everybody. He had failed to notice the baby. The brakeman looked in from his post on the platform and smiled. The paper boy found no custom till he had spoken to the baby and jingled his pocket of change for her edification. The conductor caught the fever and chucked the little one under the chin, while the old gentleman across the aisle forgot to pass up his ticket, so interested was he in playing peek-a-boo. The old lady in front relaxed, and diving into her reticule unearthed a brilliant red pippin and presented it bashfully to the little one, who, in response, put her chubby arms around the donor's neck and pressed her rosy little mouth to the old lady's cheek. It brought back a flood of remembrances to that withered heart, and a handkerchief was seen to brush first this way and then that, as if to catch a falling tear.

The train sped on and pulled into the station where the baby, with her parents, was to leave the car. A look of regret came over every face. The old gentleman asked if he couldn't kiss it just once; the old lady returned the caress she had received and the baby moved toward the door, shaking a by-by over the shoulder of her papa, to which every one responded, including the news boy, who emphasized his farewell with a wave of his hat. The passengers rushed to the side where the baby got off and watched till she turned out of sight at the other end of the station, shaking by-byes all the time. Then they lapsed into silence. They missed that baby, and not one of them would be unwilling to acknowledge it. The little one's presence had let a rift of sunshine into every heart, warm or cold, in that car. Orphan's Friend, House of Angel Guardian.

"I would lay the world at your feet," he exclaimed. But she looked at him coldly and returned: "I see no reason for troubling you, Mr. Doddy. Unless the law of gravity has been unexpectedly repealed, the earth is there already."