

9. Until 1552 it was the custom to sign each person with the sign of the Cross. This sign was anciently made with oil, the symbol of the Holy Ghost (cf. Ps. lxxxix. 20; Acts x. 38).

V. FINAL PRAYERS.

(1) The Lord's Prayer used as a Thanksgiving; (2) A prayer that God's fatherly hand may ever be over His servants; (3) A prayer for protection; (4) The Benediction. The final rubric is founded on a canon of the Church, passed A.D. 1281.

Family Reading.

An Easter Prayer.

Within the dusky pew I knelt,
And breathed a rich perfume,
For near at hand the altar steps
Were banked with snowy bloom.
And while the people's prayers rose
Like incense sweet to God,
From underneath my drooping plumes
I watched the lilies nod.

I gazed upon their golden hearts,
Their perfect whiteness rare,
Their slender stems of clearest green,
And prayed a little prayer.
'Twas never found in any book,
Or said in any cell.
And from my soul it bubbled up
Like water from a well.

"Dear Lord," I said, "when I am dead,
And done with grief and pain,
If Thou from out the narrow grave
Shouldst call me forth again
To live once more, oh, let me, then,
A spotless lily be,
Within the church on Easter morn,
To blossom, Lord, for Thee!"
—*Minna Irving, in New England Magazine.*

Love's Mastery: Or the Gower Family.

NUMBER 3.

On leaving Mrs. Fleming, Stella made her way to Lora, who was the centre of a group at some little distance. Mr. Reynier was one among them; and Captain Flamank was also standing near, of which Stella was glad. He guessed she was coming to say Good-night, and made way for her approach. The ill-will to her sister was partially obliterated by the past minutes' conversation, and yet Stella felt mortified to be forced to break through her determination, and ask a favour of Lora, that night. But she knew it would be made too publicly to meet with a denial.

"May I go and say good-night to Tracy?" she murmured, so low that no one but George Flamank could overhear the words.

"If he is not asleep," was the sister's answer, in that graceful silvery voice of hers, which fell like music on some listening ears at hand.

Captain Flamank caught her hand as, well satisfied with her answer, Stella was flitting away. "Have you had some tea, Stella?" he asked.

"No, Captain Flamank: I did not want any."

"I am afraid you are wayward, and intend starving yourself to death; but you are not to be spared so easily. Miss Gower," he continued in a lower tone, turning to Lora—who, though professedly giving her opinion on the merits of a new opera, was heeding with far more interest every word which fell from the lips of the young officer—"will you insist upon it that this perverse young lady takes some tea or supper, or whatever she may call it, before she goes to bed? Make her promise."

"Stella, nurse will give you some tea. You will take some?" the elder sister said, in obedience to the suggestion; which, perhaps, if made by any other, would have been met with dignified silence or an ironical repartee. But Lora's inmost heart, spite of itself, recognized the power of another will, to which her own submitted, even as Stella's to herself; though from how widely-different a motive! And, as though glad to yield that willing acquiescence, her voice, as she spoke, sounded more soft, more gentle even than its wont. No one present heeded the words, nor the tone, nor the almost-imperceptible flush upon the cheek—no one but George. He heeded it all; and a sense of satisfaction and security, which, however, for

some time past he had been pretty well assured of, came pleasantly across his mind.

"You hear what your sister says, and you will promise?" he said to Stella, who was all impatience to be gone.

"Yes, I promise indeed," she answered, a little moved by the unusual solicitude on her account. Then in a lower tone, "And thank you extremely, Captain Flamank, for the walnuts."

A smile came over his handsome face as he watched Stella from the room. She was going to little Tracy, then. He would have liked to see the presentation of those nuts. It was strange; but Stella had managed to perplex Captain Flamank very much that evening, far more than Lora had ever done, with all her talent and power and graceful haughtiness; and hitherto he had known so little of the child. It was certainly high time that he should know a little more.

Across the hall, up the wide stone-staircase, and then up again, tripped Stella, till Tracy's room was reached. Outside the door she paused a moment to take breath, and then, with softened quiet footsteps, pushed aside the crimson doors and entered. Very noiselessly fell her steps upon the carpet—so noiselessly that Tracy became aware of her presence only by catching the low murmur, "Nurse, is he asleep?"

"No," said the little voice in the same breath as nurse: and the next moment the rich damask curtains were pulled aside, and Stella was sitting on the bed beside her little brother. One little arm was thrown fondly around her neck, while the other hand nestled in hers; and so Tracy held her some time.

"My little darling," Stella said, "if you only knew how unhappy I have been to-night! but they would not let me come to you after all. You did not think me unkind, did you, darling?"

"O Stella!" said the child; and just at that moment he felt a hot tear fall on his little hand; and it was more than he could bear. "O don't, don't cry!" he exclaimed with all his strength. "I can bear anything but to see you cry, Stella dear! I didn't much mind after the first; only don't cry!" and he held her closer, covering her face with kisses.

"There, darling!" Stella said, checking her tears. "I am not crying now, I am smiling. And look, I have something that will please you so, and which I should not have got if I had not gone down this evening. See, five splendid little ships! We will do them up just as we did the last; and only think how pretty they will be!"

"O Stella, how nice! how pretty!" the little fellow said, taking the shells one by one within his small fingers, and gazing at them as minutely as the flickering light would permit. "Nurse, five large nutshells for boats! only think!"

"That will be fine," said nurse. "I suppose I must set about sail-making again."

"Yes, please, if you don't mind."

"And I have got something else to tell you, dear," Stella continued, bending down her head to his again, "something you will like to hear: Mrs. Fleming is come."

"What! that Mrs. Fleming we have talked about?"

"Yes, the same: the one that knew mamma. Her name is Ethel; and she is so young, so sweet, so pretty, Tracy. And she is going to tell me all about our precious mamma, some day—and, perhaps, you too. For she said she should ask Lora to let her come and see you very often while she is in London; and I know you will like her very much."

"But perhaps sister will not—." Here Tracy paused, as though he did not like to finish his sentence.

"Not let her come, you mean. I fancy she will, darling. Mrs. Fleming is cousin to Captain Flamank; and, if he wishes her to come—and I think he will, for he seems very fond of her—it is certain she will; for Captain Flamank is like Somerset, and always will have his way when he chooses it. But he is kind, Tracy, very," continued Stella, who could scarcely refrain from wishing that George and not Somerset bore to her the name of brother: "it was he who got these walnuts for you, scooped them out and all, so nicely: was it not kind?"

"Yes, very," said the child, thoughtfully.

"And do you know, Tracy dear, I do believe Lora gets more unkind than ever. I felt this evening as though I would never, never, love her any more at all. When I told her about you, and how I had promised to be with you to-night—"

"Hush, dear," said Tracy, gently interrupting her. "I don't think you should say so."

The sweet reproof, given in a voice almost of pain, struck to Stella's heart.

"Tracy darling, I can't be good and patient like you," she said; "only, if it grieves you, I won't talk to you about it."

"You know I love you?" said the little brother, pressing her hand in his, and then kissing it.

"I know that if you didn't I should like to die," answered Stella bitterly; "for no one else does."

"They will some day," whispered Tracy, in a serious tone: "they will not be able to help it. But you will not love me any the less, will you, my little Stella?"

"Never, never!" said Stella passionately. "And now, my darling, will you lie down?"

"Yes, if you like," replied the child; "but I am not sleepy to-night."

"You must try, sweet one," said his sister, giving a last kiss, and smoothing the pillows about him. "I am going to eat some supper here, before the fire: shall I leave the curtain undrawn a little—so?"

"Yes, please," Tracy answered, smiling.

"Will you have some bread and milk, Miss Stella, my dear?" asked nurse, who had overheard Stella's remark: "that is what your little brother had."

"Yes, nurse, thank you, that will do nicely," and, sitting down on her low seat, Stella ate her supper, gazing all the while into the fire, with many thoughts revolving in her mind.

"Clarice is waiting for you, dear," said nurse at length, coming into the room.

Stella rose slowly, and went on tip-toe once more to her little brother's bed-side. Tracy lay just as she had left him, with his eyes wide open. It was plain he was going to have one of those wakeful restless nights so common to him. There was one more kiss upon his lips, and a sweet, sweet smile in return.

"Tracy darling, when Mrs. Fleming comes to see you, she will talk to you about the Bible, as dear mamma used. You will like that, won't you?"

The boy's eyes kindled. "Yes, yes," he answered. "Only, Stella darling, you know I don't forget."

The words fell reproachfully on Stella's ears: she knew that they were true; but, alas! for herself, how sadly she had forgotten!

"I shall come to you to-morrow morning, after breakfast," she whispered; and, with that, Stella tore herself away, and hastened to Clarice.

Very soon after Stella had left the drawing-room Captain Flamank rejoined his cousin. He had heard her say she wished to leave early—knew, indeed, that it was somewhat against her usual custom that she had come to the party at all. As Stella had observed, he was very fond of and watchful over his favourite cousin; although he would not unwillingly have tarried awhile longer himself, yet he most cheerfully yielded his pleasure and convenience to hers on this occasion.

Lora, however, was before him at Mrs. Fleming's side. As Captain Flamank's cousin, every attention had been shown her on this evening; and very sweetly and graciously Lora was now expressing her hope that they should see very much of her during her residence in town.

"I go out very little," Mrs. Fleming answered; "but, if you will let me, I shall like to come and see you sometimes, and very much to make the acquaintance of the little invalid darling up-stairs, of whom your sister has been telling me. I am so fond of children, and I think they learn soon to like me," she continued, in that soft pleasant tone which had found its way to Stella's heart, "and I should like to come and sit with him sometimes, if he is able to bear it."

"You are very kind," Lora replied; "but poor little Tracy does not see many visitors."

"Ethel must come in the capacity of assistant-nurse, if in no other," remarked Captain Flamank. "She is quite *au fait* in everything of the kind, and would make a most valuable assistant."

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