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WHAT ONE WOMAN DID; OR, MARIAN'S CHRISTMAS BOX.

BY M.

CHAPTER I.

"I have been young and now am old; a lifetime in a few words, Marian."

"Yes," I replied, "'tis so,—and yet how seldom we realize it as we read the words."

"True, and perhaps I should not think so much of them to-day, were this not the anniversary of my seventieth birthday."

"A good old age, Aunt Mary; and what a satisfaction it must be to you to cast your memory back over the days that are past!"

"Yes, yes; but not in the way you mean, child; you are all so fond of me, Marian, that you consider me almost perfect, not knowing that in reality I am only a poor weak sinner, striving to wash my robes pure in the blood of the Lamb,—still I have great satisfaction in looking back over my past life. I can see now my Heavenly Father's guiding hand through all; can feel that He knew what was best for me, even when the way was hard; and, more than all, I can feel thankful that He has accepted and blessed my humble endeavors for His glory."

I kissed my dear old aunt and left her, (she was not my aunt, either, only I loved to call her so). I could not speak for my heart was full, and knowing as I did all she had suffered, I wondered at her great faith, and while wondering lifted up my heart to God in humble prayer that my troubles might be sanctified to me as hers had been to her.

I entered the door of my own home just as the tea-bell was ringing; the children were already in the dining-room, as was also my husband. Hurriedly, therefore, I threw off my bonnet and shawl, and went to the table, aware then for the first time of the presence of Henry Dakers, a great friend of my husband's, and real nephew, or rather grand-nephew, of old Miss Barton, from whom I had just parted.

"I must apologize for being late," I said, as I shook hands with him, "but time passes so quickly when with Aunt Mary that I lose all count of it."

"Is she not a dear old lady? Fond as I am of her, mother says I only know half her worth."

"I believe it," answered my husband, "and less than one half of all she has gone through."

"Oh, John, every one knows that she supported the family after her father's death, refusing even to marry because she was wanted at home."

"Well, Marian, go to mother, ask her all about Miss Barton,—for they were intimate friends and are still—and see then if you already know *all* about dear old Aunt Mary."

I took his advice, but my mother in-law could not attend to me then,—indeed it was several days before my patience was rewarded, and in the meantime Mary Barton had received her summons home, and was