

Children's Department.

EVENING HYMN.

The day is done:
O God the Son,
Look down upon Thy little one.

O Light of Light,
Keep me this night,
And shed round me Thy presence bright.

I need not fear
If Thou art near:
Thou art my Saviour, kind and dear.

Thy gentle eye
Is ever nigh:
It watches me when none is by.

Thy loving Ear
Is ever near,
Thy little children's voice to hear.

So, happily
And peacefully,
I lay me down to rest in Thee.

To Father, Son,
And Spirit One,
In Heaven and earth all praise be done.

OUR NELL.

CHAPTER XIII.

The same morning Derwent sat in the drawing-room at the Vicarage. He had the last number of a weekly review on his knee, and a paper-knife in his hand. But he was not cutting open the leaves; he was idly balancing the paper-knife, and looking out of the window. He was mentally uncomfortable, and his brow was wrinkled. Miss Lettice sat at the other window, stitching diligently. Contrary to his usual custom, Derwent did not care to talk, and there had been silence in the room for some time. His thoughts were unpleasant, yet for once he could not evade them, for his conscience had awaked from a long slumber, and was giving him some trouble, as the most sleepy of consciences will do when once fairly roused.

"Well," he was thinking, "I can't for the life of me keep out of these flirtations. It's my unfortunate temperament. When I get thrown with these pretty, sweet women, I can't help myself. I begin to say things I don't mean, and so it goes on, until ten to one they fall in love with me, as Annie Redfern did. Nice girl she was! And I don't think her feeling for me did her any harm. She got over it directly, and married that other fellow. No, I've never done any serious harm to a girl, and that is a great comfort. But I don't like it in myself. It's not good form; really, I don't think it's at all manly; and I am determined I never will make love again, even in the most innocent way. And as I'm quite resolved to go away at once, I hope it will be all right about this poor little Carry. I could never have believed that she could suppose me seriously in love with her; it struck me last night that she had really thought I intended to marry her. Dear me, how girls may be mistaken! I certainly gave her no reason to believe so; but I begin to think I must have an unfortunate manner. I feel affectionately, and I suppose I must show it. Well, I can't help it, it's natural to me. I feel sure Carry will be all right when I'm gone. She'll forget me in a few weeks, when she has nothing to remind her of me. It's inconvenient, but I'm sure it's the only right course, and it's not often I do wrong wilfully. Poor child, how heart-broken she looked last night, when I told her I was going away! it went to my heart. I almost gave up the idea. And yet that would never do. Her distress was only an additional reason for going. Yes, I must go, and at once."

A few minutes after, he turned to Miss Lettice, and said, abruptly

"Cousin, I think it's time that I left Hazlewood."

Miss Lettice looked up from her work in astonishment,

"Why, my dear boy, I thought you were settled down here till the end of the summer."

"So did I; but I suppose, after all, I'm beginning to get tired of idleness. I think it doesn't suit me; at any rate, in such large doses. I shall go to town and knock about there a bit. I've got a few friends to look up, and a little business to see after. And who knows but I may take your advice, after all, and make myself eligible for the Woolsack?"

Walter, tilting back in his chair, with his hands in his pockets, and an insolent smile on his face, presented a picture much out of keeping with the idea of the legal profession, and his cousin laughed.

Walter looked slightly aggrieved. "Your intentions are very laudable, Walter, and far be it from me to discourage you; but I think you would do well to stay with us a little longer. Seeing that in August London is well-nigh empty, you would find none of your friends at home; and I should think you could hardly transact your business to advantage."

"Ah!" exclaimed Walter. "I forgot that."

He rose and walked to the window, looked out for a minute, and then returning said, in a tone of fresh resolve—

"Nevertheless, I must go; call me an unreasonable fellow, but don't try and keep me. Let me see, it is now Thursday. Can I be ready to start by the end of the week?"

Miss Lettice, amazed, let her work drop. She regarded the young man keenly.

"What does this feverish energy mean? You, who cannot make up your mind in less than a week to walk into the next parish, now require only three days to form and carry out an important plan like this. You astonish me. If I were not so satisfied of your good feeling towards us, which I am sure would prevent your harbouring an unexpressed offence—"

"Nonsense, my dear cousin! You know better than that," interrupted Walter. "Don't take the trouble to find a sufficient reason for my absurdities. I assure you I do not. I suppose the fact is that having made up my mind, I want to get the disagreeable duty done as quickly as possible."

It was finally arranged that Walter should leave the next Monday; he could not be induced to stay a day longer. Great was the surprise among his friends at the farm when they heard of his immediate and unexpected departure. This did not happen till Sunday. As they were returning from church, Martha, the Vicarage servant, ran after them to tell the news. After the first expressions of astonishment, Mrs. Masters said—

"He'll be going to see his fine friends in London, no doubt. Hazlewood'll see no more of him, you may be sure."

"Nav, mother," said Mr. Masters, "he's not the lad to forget his friends, wherever he be, and big man as he'll get if talents can do it. We shall see him again some of these days."

As for Nell, the shock of the news to her had been so great as to put off for a time the full realisation of it. Over and over again did the question repeat itself within her. Will he come and say good-bye? The whole of her consciousness was merged in that one point. She saw and heard nothing around her. He had been at church that morning, sitting in the Vicarage pew. He was going away, perhaps for ever. Was that the last time she was to see him? No, it was impossible that he should go without bidding them farewell; and yet she would have deemed it equally impossible beforehand that he should not have told them that he was going away.

Carry testified neither surprise nor regret at the morning's news. She simply remained silent. The afternoon and a great part of the evening passed away, and Derwent did not come. Nell was consumed with a sort of restlessness, utterly unlike her usual reposeful energy. She must be incessantly in motion—she could not sit still.

With the dark Derwent came at last. Carry, who was in the garden, entered with him. The rest were all in the parlour. He had but a few minutes to stay, he said, and there was a general feeling of relief. Leave-takings are almost always painful, either from too much feeling or too little. The two girls were very silent. At length the last hand-shake had to be given. Carry's appeared cold and formal, but Nell gave him her hand freely, and lifted up to his face full of sorrowful affection. The look was so frank, so earnest, so trustful, that it went straight to Walter's heart, and smote it sore. It was as if his conscience had met him in Nell's look, and convicted him of cowardice and selfishness. As he went out into the night, it was Nell's face that haunted him. And Nell, now that the yearning of her heart had been fulfilled, and she had, for the last time, looked in the face of her friend with entire self-revelation, was comforted and lifted up above her sorrow into a region of passionate renunciation.

(To be continued.)

Family Reading.

INFLUENCE.

They tell us that each pebble dropped
On ocean's glassy breast
Must make a pulse in boundless deep.
Whose ripples never rest.

But ever sweep through coral caves:
Or break on distant sands;
Or kiss cold faces which the deep
Holds far from loving hands:

Or eddy round the treasure lost
Which her calm bosom hides,
Yet still for ever ebbs and flows
Upon the changing tides.

They tell us that each word we speak,
Though ne'er so softly said,
Shall still be throbbing through the air
Long after we are dead:

And that, although we hear them not,
Around us ever ring
The laugh and sigh of long ago
The shifting breezes bring.

It may be that with mighty word,
Like whirlwinds on the deep,
We stir the hearts of other men,
And rouse them from their sleep.

It may be that each word we speak,
Like an echo on the air,
Though scarcely heeded when 'tis said,
Yet leaves its impress there.

How'er this be, 'tis God's decree
We cannot live alone:
No one can fold his arms and say,
"My life is all my own."

The life of each is bound to all
By cords we cannot sever—
A ripple that shall never cease
Upon Time's mighty river.

But, like the pulses on the tide,
Or the air which echoes still,
Must the words and deeds of each of us
The lives of others fill.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME.

Though it is by no means necessary that it should confine itself to so comparatively narrow a sphere, still when it goes out into the world, it does so quietly and silently, "vaunteth not itself," and steps noiselessly along the by-paths, seeking not to claim attention to itself and its good deeds.

Charity's autograph is somewhat rare; her gifts generally pass from hand to hand, are bestowed upon those who most need them, and who are least in a position to make them known to Fame; and being, in majority of cases, judiciously distributed, they effect, all the good they were destined to produce. Ostentation, on the contrary, never thinks of home at all, and considers the by-paths of life "low;" she walks forth in the

highways, and "loves greetings in the market-place;" her name stands conspicuous at the head of every subscription-list for building magnificent churches, great hospitals, and instituting public charities; her means, though commonly large, are so singularly apportioned, that she cannot afford to bestow the smallest sums upon lowly individuals; while she finds it the easiest thing in the world to lay out thousands *pro bono publico*. A flagrant instance of the nature of her deeds came before us a few days since. We read in the public press, in a list of subscriptions for erecting a new church, a certain name appended to a gift of £30,000. Alas! while reading this, we happened to know—though not through the public press—that a near relative of this munificent donor was, with a family of six children, in absolute need of necessities of life, having been refused the slightest assistance by the 30,000*l.* subscriber—ay, even the continuation of a small yearly stipend, granted by *their late father!*

SUNSHINE AND CLOUD.

Some real lives do—for some certain days or years—actually anticipate the happiness is once felt by good people (to the wicked it never comes), its sweet effect is never wholly lost. Whatever trials follow, whatever pains of sickness or shades of death, the glory precedent still shines through, cheering the keen anguish, and tinging the deep cloud. I will go further. I do believe there are some human beings so born, so reared, so guided from a soft cradle to a calm and late grave, that no excessive suffering penetrates their journey. And often, these are not pampered, selfish beings, but Nature's elect, harmonious and benign; men and women mild with charity, kind agents of God's kind attributes. . . . But it is not so for all. What then? His will be done, as done it surely will be, whether we humble ourselves to resignation or not. The impulse of creation forwards it; the strength of powers seen and unseen, has its fulfilment in charge. Proof of a life to come must be given. In fire and in blood, if needful, must that proof be written. In fire and in blood do we trace the record throughout nature. In fire and in blood does it cross our own experience. Sufferer, faint not through terror of this burning evidence. Tired wayfarer, gird up thy loins, look upward, march onwards. Pilgrims and brother mourners, join in friendly company. Dark through the wilderness of this world stretches the way for most of us; equal and steady be our tread; be our cross our banner. For staff we have His promise, whose "word is tried, whose way is perfect;" for present hope His providence, "who gives the shield of salvation, whose gentleness makes great;" for final home His bosom, who "dwells in the height of heaven;" for crowning prize a glory, exceeding and eternal. Let us so run that we may obtain; let us endure hardness as good soldiers; let us finish our course, and keep the faith reliant in the issue to come off more than conquerors. "Art thou not from everlasting, mine Holy One? We shall not die?"—*Charlotte Brontë*.

PEN'S GIFT.

"Pen, my lad, will you take a message for me to the market, before it closes?"

"It's rather a long way," responded Pen, looking doubtfully at his crutch.

"Well, you can take your own time coming back, so as you get there afore six. I'll give you twopence, and that's more than you'll make hanging about here; and you can leave your matches on my stall."

It was quite true. Pen thought of the many wintry afternoons he had hung about, without taking even one penny; so he handed over his stock of merchandise to the care of the apple-woman, and received a short homily to be delivered to a certain greengrocer at a corner of the market; and then buttoning up his venerable jacket with the care and caution that its antiquity demanded, he set out on his expedition.

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